

A SPRINGTIDE IN PALESTINE

BY
MYRIAM HARRY



Madame Harry, the well-known Syrian-French authoress, presents these impressions of Palestine revisited after an absence of many years. The book is practically a confession of her conversion to Zionism, brought about by the realisation of the permanence and nobility of the work of the Jewish settlers. As a revelation of what has already been accomplished in reclaiming the derelict land, in building, in education, in the re-creation of a dying language, these sketches of life in the new Jewish communities will create surprise and discussion.

In the sympathy of her interpretation of the lure of Palestine, in her power to convey the tragedy and beauty of the past, in her vivid portraiture of the multitude of human types—primitive and sophisticated—that crowd into Jerusalem every Eastertide, Madame Harry shows herself an artist in words, and her book is one which should be read for its own sake as well as for the sidelights it throws on the astonishing progress of Zionism.

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A SPRINGTIDE IN PALESTINE



JEWISH SEA-SCOUTS NEAR THE BATHING PLACE, TEL-AVIV.

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PREFACE

IN France I had held aloof from Zionism. When I received Zionist pamphlets I put them aside. Even the term "Zionism" displeased me: it seemed an attempt to materialise the immaterial, to weigh and measure a melody of harps.

Moreover, with a naïf infatuation I felt it infringed my preserves. The hill of Zion belonged to me: there I was born: there, in Christ Church, baptised. David's tower had thrown its austere shadow athwart my childhood; the cedars of the Armenian convent had lent it their perfumed sadness.

Even the name "Zion," living on so many centuries with the ancient stones, had become all but petrified. One hardly dared speak it: one said "Jerusalem." Always I beheld it proud and solitary; and now they were disturbing my hill, bandying its name in Congresses, using it as a political slogan.

I pictured to myself a seething tumult environing its silence: down below the fanatical populace, up above (and why I cannot say) four hundred and fifty priests of Baal leaping and yelling, that fire from heaven might descend on their Zionist sacrifices. And so, when my fate took me to Syria in 1920, I had decided never to revisit Jerusalem.

But when once so near at hand, how could I resist the call of my childhood? . . . Yet, fearful, I shut my eyes as I left the railway, at the foot of Zion.

I opened them enchanted.

Zion, my Zion, was still there, as ancient and as grey. Only a German Clock-Tower and a breach in the walls made for Kaiser Wilhelm disfigured it. (And why has the Government not kept its promise to remove

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the one and mend the other?) In all else—ramparts, gates, cupolas—Zion still kept her melancholy beauty and her archaic unity.

But in front of the old city another had sprung up, huge and modern, almost wholly Jewish. Everywhere were Hebrew inscriptions, everywhere “shields of David,” the six-point star. Soldiers of the Macca-bæan battalion wore on their sleeves the *Menorah*, the sevenfold candelabra; and the boy-scouts, the Lion of Judah. And but one greeting: “Shalôm! Shalôm!”—the ancient biblical “Shalôm Aleikom”—Peace be with You!

I became acquainted with Zionists. They were priests neither of Jehovah nor of Baal. With religion they had little concern, with agriculture, industry, hygiene, very much.

I was shown the admirable plans for the Hebrew University on Mount Scopus: for the harnessing of the Falls of the Jordan for electricity: for the drying of the Dead Sea in order to obtain potash and fertilise the desert.

I met lawyers, fluent in many languages and pleading only in Hebrew: journalists, once collaborating on the world's great papers, now publishing a Hebrew daily: doctors, poets, bankers, officers, who gloried to be sons of Judah, wished to be simply and openly Jews.

And I met the wizard, the father of the revivification of the ancient Jewish speech—Eliezer Ben-Jehuda, who, repudiating the jargon of the Dispersion, has made in less than forty years a living tongue of the language of the Book: a common and triumphant speech from the language of prayers and lamentations: so supple, so strong, so melodious, that it can

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translate equally Dante and Meredith, Plato and Anatole France.

I came to understand that Zionism was a force.
I came to admire it.

I returned to Syria. Two years passed.

Then there came to me at Damascus a young Zionist visitor:

"You know Zionism without its colonies? Then you know nothing of it. Come to see the spring in Galilee: come to see the Jewish farmers plough 'their' Promised Land."

And thus I returned to Palestine.

From "Dan to Beersheba" I have seen the "Warriors of Labour" constructing the roads that lead to Zion.

I have beheld a new Jewish nation, re-afforesting the "Mountains of the Lord."

I have heard joyful Youth singing in the language of King David, awaiting the salvation of Israel.

I have perceived that Zionism is a mystical poetry.
I have loved it. I have believed in it.

MYRIAM HARRY.

April, 1924.

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CHAPTER I

DAMASCUS TO TIBERIAS

FLOWERING gardens, murmuring streams, minarets rising slender above mud houses. . . . Damascus disappeared, the desert begins.

A black, volcanic, shattered desert, like a land accursed, and above it the heavens display their most angelic smiles. Never light more pellucid, nor air more rarefied. One would think oneself in the dawn of the world, when chaos was still uncertain in which kingdom to place this rock-sown country, these masses of metallic rocks, with pumice and lava. . . .

We journey along the *Darb-el-Hadj*, that route of horrible fame that, *Mahmal* and *Emir-el-Hadj* at their head, so many tranced multitudes followed through so many centuries.

At the moment, pilgrimage to Mecca is interrupted; the *Mahmal* dreams in the Damascus museum; our train bears profane travellers: hundreds of Americans who, disembarked at Beirut, and having visited Baalbek and the City of the Ommayyads, are going, like ourselves, to Palestine.

The traces of an old railway appear from time to time; the French El-Mouzerib line, destroyed during the War. The ruined stations and reservoirs take a frightening aspect in these elevated and limpid solitudes. And very disconcerting, too, are the little stations at which our train stops, where no one gets

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out and no one gets in; little houses roofed with tiles, placed with rectilinear exactitude, built of sombre basalt-blocks, and wearing a mingled bourgeois and satanic air in this land of eternal immobility.

Around and about, no homes, no verdure—nothing, on the face of it, to justify a railway; our eyes can only just distinguish, occasionally, a galloping mantle among the blocks of lava; the shining black of the dolerites; camels marching like propylæa; and far off, on hill crests like castles, villages with brazen tints. . . .

I know this country, black as Satan, free as the ocean: the Trachonitis of the Romans, the *Ledja*, the “refuge,” of very ancient nomad tribes, whom conquest has never tamed.

I was here two years before, in an armoured train, immediately after the Hauran insurrection, before the mutilated corpse of Abd-el-Rahman Pasha had been recovered: the “Emir of the Pilgrimage” who, for twenty years, had convoyed the treasure of Damascus and Stamboul to the Tomb of the Prophet, across unsubdued lands, without running the slightest risk, and who paid with his life his error of returning—as a French agent.

But now I hardly recognise the countryside; the lava rocks, the upheaved stones, disappear beneath waving grasses, beneath marguerites and wild poppies. Here and there Bedouins are turning up the soil, or rather edging round the stones; others sow corn, followed by a flock of larks swift to gobble it. Around is a most enchanting horizon: to the right, delicately graduated undulations, the chain of the Anti-Lebanon, crowned with snowy Hermon; to the left, the sombre massif of the Hauran, crowned with misty Djebel-el-Druz, the biblical mountain of Basan.

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“What desolation! Not a single tree!”

Thus my travelling companion, a young colonist, an agricultural engineer of the faculty of Montpellier in France, who is to pilot me through the New Judæa.

“You will see not one tree from here to Deraa, and yet the land of Basan was celebrated for its oaks, which equalled the cedars of Lebanon, and its pastures: ‘bulls fattened on Basan’!”

It was also a land of giants, the Rephaim, from whom was Og the king descended, whom the Hebrews conquered. . . .

“Not one tree: and you have seen how they cultivate the soil! And yet this volcanic country, apparently so arid, is, precisely on account of its porous rocks which store up the dew, extremely fertile. In *our* hands it would bear an hundredfold. You will see in Palestine what we have made of the most stony mountains, the most desert plains.”

“Yes, but, if I mistake not, you have at your service the latest devices and considerable capital?”

“What is money without will, without an ideal! Give to these Hauranites the millions of Rothschild, and watch the result: at the end of a week their machinery will be destroyed: they will go to feast in Damascus, and order themselves gold teeth! They will buy women—the oldest will, naturally, get the youngest—automobiles, and American shoes! The wisest will hide away their gold, but not one will re-afforest a hill or harness a waterfall. . . . No! money is nothing without the ideal; we, *we* work for an idea, to gain a Fatherland, to have, in short, a nationality.”

“No need to ask if you are a Zionist.”

“All Jews, consciously or unconsciously, are Zion-

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ists. Zionism, love of Zion, is not, as you would seem to believe, a modern sentiment. It is an instinct which has lived in the depths of every Jewish soul, since the Destruction of the Temple, for two thousand years. Our tabernacles have always been built pointing to Jerusalem; three times a day we say our prayers: 'Hasten, Liberator of Israel, to restore the City of David: hasten to bring to their heritage the scattered of Zion.' And you know, do you not, that on Pentecost night we give one another, in all solemnity, rendezvous, 'Next year, in Jerusalem.' . . . There is no Jewish family, be it never so poor, so distant, that does not put aside, each evening before Sabbath, and while lighting up the *Menorah*, an obol for Yeruschalayim. It used to be a mystical sentiment, a passive Messianic faith. Persecution in Russia, forty years ago, transformed this vague homesickness into a definite desire: a desire for a country wherein to live in security, wherein to escape from the terrors of the ghetto and its unhealthy and humiliating life. Naturally they looked to the land of Israel, and a society, the *Chovevi-Zion*, the Friends of Zion, was formed for immigration to Palestine, and colonisation. My parents were among these first Jewish settlers. Unhappily, they knew nothing of agriculture, and the land they were given, near Jaffa, was extremely unhealthy — marshes and dunes infested by mosquitoes, devoured by fevers. Many were carried off by malaria, but none wished to go away. They were in *Erez-Israel*, what matter if they should die? My parents lived through it, but their life was fearfully hard. For some years they dwelt in a grotto—my mother there acquired life-long ill-health—then in a tent; the Turks would not allow Jews to build houses. Nevertheless, they mas-

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tered marshes and dunes. They transformed the land. They planted forests of eucalyptus and wide vineyards. They named the spot Rechoboth, that is, 'May-God-Increase'—increase their riches and their physique. In the colony where, once, they died of fever, a sanatorium is to be installed. That shows you what can be done in this country—with a will and, above all, with an ideal. I was born at Rechoboth, as also five of my brothers, all strong and healthy like myself."

At the door the Syrian guard demanded our tickets. My Zionist stood up to give them. I looked at him: his head nearly touched the roof; he was as solid as an oak of Basan.

"One would think you, too, were descended from the Rephaim, a scion of the house of Og."

He sat down, smiling.

"Yes, God has indeed enlarged my chest, as He will for every Jewish child who can run about in the sun, play on horseback, and who will no longer 'fly where there is no pursuit, tremble before a leaf in the wind.'"

And, pointing out to me Bedouin cavaliers who were galloping alongside the train:

"See those men! It is freedom and assurance which makes them fine. There is no reason why we should not have that proud bearing, after one generation. Are we not of the same Semitic stock? The sons of Ishmael and the sons of Isaac are made to understand one another, and they will."

"That is not exactly what the newspapers would have us believe."

"That is of no importance. It is political propaganda. Some Governments or parties think they

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have an interest to prevent a Jewish-Arab understanding. It is too complicated to explain; you will see and judge for yourself. . . .”

We had arrived at Kirbet-el-Zhazal, the Ruin of the Gazelle, where the French agents were assassinated.

Burnt-out houses, wrecked machinery, twisted rails still bear witness to the explosion: but we quickly withdrew our eyes and looked at the striking and picturesque group of cavaliers who were executing in front of our wagon the “Ride of Friendship,” chanting to a cadenced and languorous rhythm.

From the next carriage came in answer unrestrained “Yoyous.”

For in our train of Americans we were carrying also an Arab harem. We were carrying the betrothed of a very great Bedouin chieftain, whose followers had come to this station to take her away to some far and solitary tent. . . .

She descended: a Damascus girl, swathed in a black kerchief. But when she mounted the white mare, a mare with blue talismanic necklaces and a tail bright with henna, she showed the delicate legs of the city dweller, clothed in rose silk.

Swift, a vast purple mantle slashed with gold, her husband’s mantle, was thrown over her: other black bundles were hoisted on to hacks, and the procession departed, surrounded by the cavaliers, who chanted the languorous song, while scattering the flies from their saddles.

At Deraa the two hundred Americans went to the buffet, in groups, under the guidance of Europeanised men of Jerusalem and Damascus who, for the occasion, had readopted their Oriental costume, and who, for

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yet greater local colour, waved shepherd's crooks before their docile flocks.

We spent the half-hour in a visit to the Arab town, one of the most curious in the Hauran, and one of the most ancient of the biblical cities: *Edrei*, where the Lord of Hosts delivered up to the children of Israel the celebrated Og, King of Basan.

Built on the top of a hill, arid and savage, Deraa rises on an immemorial subterranean city, and on the relatively recent Roman town, with its *nymphæum* and a pretty swimming-bath destined to watery sports, whither came perhaps Titus and Berenice. . . .

Below, in the walled ravine, a huge, inexhaustible well, which watered the flocks of Jacob and of Job; where still, in spring, over a *hundred thousand* camels gather, the flock of the Palmyrian tribe, the Roualas. . . .

Just then Arab women were drawing water, with petrol-cans for buckets! Oh, those petrol-cans, how they spoil the East! Some emptied them into a Roman sarcophagus, others climbed the steep ascent to the town: their jewels flash, their veils stream back, their hips sway, and, on their erect heads worthy of antique statues, gleam the horrible amphoræ in tin. . . .

After Deraa, we are geographically in Palestine: but politically we are still in Syria. We followed the Djolan, the ancient Gaulanitis. The countryside is completely transformed. We descend, and still descend, piercing rock walls, thundering over bridges, dominating torrents, finally stopping at the French military post, hidden beneath enchanting palm thickets. (If only Damascus could have these palms!)

And here, at great depth, the Yarmuk itself, rushing through borders of oleanders, not seeming the pathetic

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stream that decided the Empire of a world. For here untamed Arabia defeated the civilisation of Byzance, and here Heraclius, his army lost at the bottom of the precipice, cried: "Farewell, unhappy Syria, my lovely province! Now for ever the Barbarians shall hold you!"

More delightful oases, swaying groves perfumed with palm and tamarisk and lavender. Then the train leaves the picturesque gorges to go down below sea-level and rush towards the bed of Jordan in the sunken plain of Tiberias.

We pass the frontier post of Syria and stop at Samach, the first Palestinian station, guarded by Hindu soldiers whose languid bronze faces are encircled by immense yellow turbans. And there, surrounded by high mountains, like a tarnished mirror, is the sea of Galilee, the lake of the Gospels!

I was disillusioned.

The agricultural engineer consoled me. The harsh light was unfavourable. One must take a boat, cross the lake . . . one should embark at Tiberias at sunset, and sail to Capernaum by moonlight.

Alas! when the English official had done with our passports we found it impossible to go to Tiberias: the American caravan had booked up everything. Not a boat, not a room, not a bed!

A second disillusionment. I had so wished, this first night in Galilee, to dream on the lake.

"We will come back there when the Americans have gone. For the moment we can only return to the train and go on to Haifa. There we shall find comfortable accommodation. I will telephone about it now. . . ."

CHAPTER II

THE DIVINE CARMEL

A DELICIOUS morning, in the lulling armchair on the white terrace, perfumed with the bitter and heady scent of cypress and pine.

Before me, the sea, profoundly blue in its immense bay, where little boats go about the Leviathan from America which awaits the return of its tourists.

Behind me, the house: fresh and inviting with the squat ogives of the hall, and its welcoming Hebrew inscription—translated for me. On the sill of the door is the olive-wood case of the *mezvuzza*, holding the Shema: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is One."

I am in a Zionist boarding-house, managed by a friendly and learned Polish lady who has just sat down beside me.

She explains that the houses near by, all of the same whiteness and the same comfortable heaviness, were, before the War, the residences of the German colony, founded by Würtemberger "Templars" who declined military service, but promised to serve Prussian propaganda.

At the foot of Mount Carmel for more than half a century they had made Haifa a real Riviera: and in the War thither came all *Junker* slackers. After the War most of the "Templars" left the country: the English and Zionists took over their houses.

"This house," said my Zionist, "was the old German consulate. A French shell went right through it. I have had it repaired."

"A French shell?"

"Yes, fired by Mad Joan. . . . Ah! that is a story by itself. . . . When you go up on to Carmel, you

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will see a little pyramid in front of the convent. Here reposed the bones of the two thousand sick and wounded soldiers of the great Army of Egypt, whom Buonaparte confided to the Carmelites, whose monastery had become a vast hospital. But when Napoleon left Palestine, Djezzar the Butcher, the Pasha of Acre, came up with an army and slew monks and wounded men, destroyed everything and wiped out the monastery. Many years later fresh Carmelites gathered the scattered bones and buried them under a little pyramid; and the sailors of a man-of-war made a cross for it. Then came the War and the German troops. This house was used by the Consul H., one of Djemal Pasha's bloodhounds. For some reason or desire for vengeance he pointed out these poor bones to the Turks, who scattered them to the winds, and sent the cross to Liman von Sanders, at his headquarters at Nazareth. But, somehow, the commander of the man-of-war *Jeanne d'Arc* heard about it. He was Frigate-Captain Trabaud of the French Navy, now Governor of the Lebanon, whose vessel had captured the isle of Rouad—once a pirates' nest—off Tripoli, had installed a post there, and in face of every Turkish attack had revictualled the starving Lebanon: and had carried through so many insane yet fortunate exploits up and down the Mediterranean that the Arabs called the ship *Hann-el-Medjouneh*, Joan the Possessed, Joan the Demoniac.

“ Captain Trabaud undertook to revenge the sacrilege of Carmel. One day he put in to Haifa, and signalled to the German consul that he must leave his house. Then he fired, so accurately that the shells came through the roof and gutted the consulate, without harming a single neighbouring house. . . .

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And when the Turks were astonished at this precision, the consul explained they were not Frenchmen who were shooting, but Alsatians !”

In the afternoon we went up Carmel: through the gardens and orange-groves of the German colony. Slowly we climbed the flank of the ancient biblical mountain, where Elijah the Prophet had summoned and confounded the four hundred and fifty priests of Baal of the lovely pagan Queen Jezebel, herself grand-priestess of Sidonian Astarte.

First, and piously, we visited the little monument where repose, this time, I hope, for eternity, the ashes of the soldiers of Napoleon; then, opposite the ruined Carmelite convent, we went down to the grotto where Elijah had set up an altar to the God of Israel, and founded a school of prophets.

Since the earliest times this mountain has been a holy mountain, a place of sacrifice. Before Baal and Astarte there had been the god Carmel, the god of the vine, elder brother of Bacchus and Pan, to whom were planted in the high places, as temples, groves of sweet-smelling trees and vineyards.

To-day the sanctuary of Elijah still draws the most diverse pilgrims: Mohammedans, Druses, Maronites, Orthodox Greeks, Melchite Greeks, all come to burn candles or bring offerings to Mar-Elias-el-Khader, to the Springtime-Saint, to the eternally young: to him who, living in a cloud, can withhold rain or extend his green mantle over the most arid rocks.

While we were in the grotto a Syrian girl, dressed in Parisian modes, dipped in a lamp a bit of cotton, and hid it away with many precautions in her reticule. . . .

Outside, the square and massive monastery, sturdy

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as a fortress, is surrounded by cultivated fields, wherein, shod in sandals and clad in baize, work novice monks.

At the end of a long avenue of cypresses is another domain: little, regular houses; little, regular gardens, where other young people work, not in the least monkish. Hair and skirts very short, arms and legs bare, women turn up the soil, while men in Russian hats and shirts cart firewood, and pretty, blonde children, still unsteady on their feet, pick up stones.

"Shalôm!" says my companion.

"Shalôm!" they reply, without bothering about us further.

"They are Zionist colonists, who came two years ago. The Jewish National Fund bought the land from the Germans. The fund is negotiating for the rest of Carmel, barren and waterless, which stretches for a dozen miles to the plain of Jezreel. This was the magnificent heritage of the tribe of Aser: 'The magnificence of Carmel shall be given him.' We will bring it back to its ancient fertility, we will re-afforest it with olives, and Aser, as of old, shall be able to 'bathe his feet in oil.'"

A spring murmurs in a pine wood above a promontory. Was this one of the "High Places" of the god Carmel when, crowned with vine-leaves, his devotees danced to the flute? The ancient stones on which we sit were perhaps the altar where were sacrificed the first grapes, and the first vows exchanged. Around us, the most varied flowers: violets and adonis and cyclamen, flowers of the East and the West, fraternally united in this land of ancient cults, where the aroma of resinous trees evaporates like incense.

Below us is the wonderful bay: the whole Phœnician sea, which still bathes the maritime cities, Tyre and

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Sidon, shining and desolate, and nearer to us, white and vaporous as the foam of Aphrodite, Acre, the fortified, the ancient Acco, the impregnable city which resisted the children of Israel, but gave itself freely to Cleopatra.

Below, at our feet, is Haifa, the European, the Germanic, ringed with green gardens, grey-green and bright green, olives and oranges: and beyond, the plain of Jezreel, traversed by the Kishon: Mount Tabor, round as a woman's breast: the mountains of Nazareth, whence Napoleon fell upon the Mamelukes: and, very high, dim on the horizon, the chain of the Anti-Lebanon, where ancient snowy Hermon shines from the clouds.

On the way back to our boarding-house we passed the house of Abdul-Baha-Abbas, the founder of Bahism; the new Persian Prophet, who, in this land saturated with religions, yet found worshippers. His home is shut up, and its lord departed; he sleeps on the height, on the sacred mountain which looks across to Ispahan, whence his father was driven in exile. One of his disciples, unable to survive the death of the Prophet, slew himself on his tomb, and throughout Palestine, where he had been venerated, grief was universal.

I, too, regret the departure of this mild old man, robed in white, who would take from his pocket, indifferently, St. Matthew's Gospel, Sakia-Mouny's Precepts, the Koran, or the Talmud. He wanted to explain his doctrine to me, two years ago, when I paid a fleeting visit to Palestine. For those who are familiar with Theosophy it was, perhaps, not very new: but he preached it in the midst of the worst theological hatreds, and he called his one God the Lord of Peace.

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I remember one detail. At the end of the interview I asked him his opinion of Feminism. He hesitated, perplexed: then, evasively: "Woman is Man's equal, if she brings harmony into the world!"

Departing, I saw on the closed balcony, behind very close bars, shifting shadows; and I was told that the Persian Prophet, like any mortal Mohammedan, shut up his women. . . .

We went to Acre, to let the crowd of Americans pass by. It is quite near, along the Mediterranean, and, although there was no road, we went by automobile.

At first there was a vague track through palm woods, and we crossed the Kishon—the river that carried away the four hundred and fifty priests of Baal—by a swaying bridge. Then we got deep into sand among a tangle of dunes; and our chauffeur, very politely, asked us to walk. He would catch us up again, Allah willing.

And so we resigned ourselves, walking along the charming beach, and occasionally looking back to the chauffeur, who was searching the ground with his eyes, and testing it with a stick.

Suddenly he waved his hand: Hamdullah! He has found it! He had found the main road, or rather a kind of old stair-carpet in lattice-work which goes right along the sands. The wind of the past few days had buried it.

On this lattice-road we went; but as the dunes once more covered it, our chauffeur said he would prefer the water, and boldly entered the sea.

Oh, what a delightful excursion! We splashed about in the waves, chased fishes, and carried away as trophies streaming seaweed on our wheels. The



AIN-HAROD : AN ANCIENT MILL AND A VIEW OF THE CAMP OF THE GEDUD-HAVODA.

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foam splashed us, the spray kissed our lips, we were Tritons in a motor, going to conquer the maritime cities, to conquer Acre the impregnable, so white against its blue sea and golden sand.

Still, I felt happier when our chauffeur came back to dry land. We crossed a little stream, the Belus, on whose banks the Phœnicians, by burning plants which contained soda, accidentally discovered glass.

A little further on is Tel-el-Torum, the artificial crest, where came Guy de Lusignan from Jerusalem to besiege Acre. There also Richard Cœur-de-Lion received Saladin and, I think, the beautiful Rebecca of a Walter Scott romance which disturbed my childhood.

Later, Napoleon set up his artillery on the same spot, against the invincible city.

The present town still keeps its old walls, repaired by Djezzar the Butcher. And one finds, from time to time, too, old French cannon that Buonaparte sent from Egypt by sea, and that Admiral Sidney captured, and used at Acre against Napoleon's army.

And there still exist a few narrow and tortuous streets, a few tumbledown passages, a few mediæval arcades, which saw the prelates of France, the earls of England, and those knights who, coming over on the Crusade, gave their name, Hospitallers of St. John, to the town, St. John of Acre.

But how describe the charm of the mosque, how tell its poesy? It is not, properly speaking, a mosque, but a mass of religious edifices; a mass of ancient constructions which time has harmonised, and which make of the *djemaa* of Acre the loveliest of disorders.

Oh! the courtyard, surrounded by little cupolas and little barred cells, and in front of them ogives

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and colonnades a trifle thick, a trifle squat, but set off by tall palms with their own trembling cupolas, completing a perfect architectural balance. . . .

And the morning shadow of the palms in the chequered court ! And the prayer-mats between the living columns, on which, kneeling, the disciples of the Koran sway like a tree in the wind !

The mosque itself is famous, but hardly enchanted us. It is a collection of bric-à-brac, made with the perished beauties of Tyre and Cæsarea and Samaria, unequal columns and disassorted capitals brought by Djazzar, the Butcher of the wounded, who mutilated also temples and churches.

But Djazzar himself sleeps a little way off, under the most poetical of cupolas. A great green standard covers his tomb, itself raised on a huge green turban. A little stairway, by a secret door, leads on to the sea. Is it so that he may better hear the waves, or fly from the bloody dreams that haunt him ?

Outside, above the spotless dome, a palm sways its leaves unheedingly. O Palm !

CHAPTER III

THE " FRIENDS OF ZION "

" LET us visit the camp of the *Chalutzim*," suggests my guide, as we go down from the boarding-house to the beach. " It is at the foot of Carmel, in the old convent of the Ladies of Nazareth. A tremendous scandal has been made of this acquisition, but it would be fairer to blame the Congregation, which sold a religious institution, at a very high price, to Jews. But, be assured, the *Chalutzim* do not profane the convent."

" What exactly are these ' *Chalutzim*,' who are so often mentioned ?"

" It is the plural of the Hebrew '*Chalutz*': pioneer, advance guard. It is a military term, adopted since the War. The *Chalutzim* are, in effect, the continuators of the ' Friends of Zion ' of whom I have told you. But there is this difference. The ' Friends of Zion,' too, worked for the colonisation of Palestine; but they were not obliged to go there themselves. They remained peacefully in Russia or America, attending to their business; and such an one, who gave drink to the Pilgrim and supported a goat at Tiberias, could boast of being a *Chovevi Zion*.

" But the *Chalutz* is obliged to come himself to Palestine, and work with his hands. He it is who must prepare for Jacob's children the material roads of Zion. And his Zionism is a purely national aspiration. He holds that Israel has groaned to heaven long enough, has too long knocked his forehead against millennial rocks, without result. And the War, too, has taught him. Having fought on all fronts for a land not his own, for the liberty of others, he had hoped for citizenship and brotherhood: but he has perceived

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that blood spilt in common cannot bring equality between hangman and victim. Receiving recognition from no people, he has understood that he must conquer, peacefully, a Fatherland and a nationality. But that nationality, and our Jewish soul, almost as much dispersed as our bodies in countless epochs and lands of exile—we can build it anew only on the soil of our forefathers. We can regenerate and stabilise the Jewish race only by a return to the agricultural life of our ancestors, and their Hebrew language. And that is why you see thousands and thousands of intellectual men and women leave their studies to become the workmen and peasants of our Holy Land.”

“ From what country do they come ? ”

“ Above all, from Russia, but from Poland and Roumania as well, where, before the War, in which they fought alongside their fellow-citizens, they were tolerated and where now they are persecuted. One cannot imagine their tribulations before they could land here. There are some who have been moving towards Jerusalem since the Armistice, suffering the most horrible privations, through Siberia, and China, and Persia, to find at last that they are refused permission to enter the country, because their papers are not in order, or have been lost ! Others have waited for months in Russian ports, seeking a passage. I can show you men who sailed from Odessa to Constantinople in a fishing smack. Quite recently two young men who had been refused permission to land, and were being taken back to Europe, jumped into the sea opposite Saida, and reached the Syrian shore : disguised as Arabs, they got through the French frontier-posts and came to one of the colonies in Upper Galilee. Many, inevitably, die on the way. But what matter ?



CHALUTZIM: ROAD BUILDING.

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THE " FRIENDS OF ZION "

They leave nothing behind them. Their one hope, their one object, is Eretz-Israel."

We went into the convent of the Ladies of Nazareth. The huge courtyard was covered with tents, and busy people came and went among them. The classrooms and dormitories of the Arab school-children serve them as caravanserais, and the chapel has become a sick-room, where white-robed nurses, with their stiff head-dress embroidered with the *Morgen-David*, the shield of David, the six-point star, look at once sphinxes and sisters.

Under colonnades, on armchairs, the most exhausted patients are resting. Some, of an extreme thinness, have the deep, anguished eyes of martyrs.

No, the one-time cloister of the Christian ladies is indeed not profaned.

" Shalôm ! Shalôm !" and quickly we walked on, half ashamed of our inquisitiveness.

" Do they all land at Haifa ?"

" At Haifa and at Jaffa, according to the available accommodation. After the Armistice the Chalutzim prepared to come in thousands. For the last year the British Government has felt obliged to close the flood-gates. Scarce one thousand a month are allowed to disembark. The Government dreads an economic crisis, but I think it wrong. When one is dealing with a country like Palestine, which once fed three million people, and with a race as hard-working and highly-civilised as the Jews, the increase of population can only add to the resources. And maybe, too, Zionism is one condition of the health and equilibrium of Europe. Look at Russia ! How are you going to use the overflowing energy of a new generation, growing up hardened and embittered ? Send them

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to Palestine ! There they will find an ideal for their energy, a tonic for their growing pessimism. And, as Europe treats us as undesirables, she should encourage us to quit. She should applaud the return of the outlaw to his own land. And who knows but that she may regret his going, one day: distance lends enchantment to the Jew."

"Who looks after the Chalutzim when they arrive?"

"The Zionist Executive, whose President is Dr. Weizmann. The Executive lodges the new-comers, lets them recover from the journey, disinfects them, gives them new equipment, and, after two or three weeks' rest, sends them to the Labour Bureau, which finds them work on the colonies, on the roads, or in the ports. . . . Few have any special skill, except those trained to agriculture in our Zionist centres in Europe—but all are workers, sober and intelligent, fired by the single hope: to rewin a nationality, to live in harmony with the land and themselves."

We returned to the port. On the way we met endless carts loaded with sand, and lorries full of boxes, driven by strong young men, supple and well knit, with a something both very daring and very childlike, at the same time resembling cowboys and Gothic saints.

And there were many Chalutzoth (Hebrew plurals are extremely complicated)—young women and girls, mostly ex-students, who are determined to do their share of rough toil with their menfolk. A short, straight dress with leather belt, sandals, and short hair, make them look like shepherdesses, but a little too hefty.

At the docks they were shovelling, filling bags with coal. One of them swayed unsteadily under the burden.

"Ah ! That's Jehoudith," cries my guide; "she

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took her diploma in chemical engineering at Geneva, at the same time as myself. . . . Shalôm !"

" Shalôm !" she replies, unheedingly, wholly immersed in her black task.

And I was reminded of that other Russian pioneer, the wonderful French writer of the African colony, Isabella Eberhardt, who became a stevedore at Marseilles. What a work of hope and romance, lyrical, grievous, and weighty, these " pioneers " will leave us !

I salute you, Sister Jehoudith.

In the evening, at supper, our Polish hostess tells us that Ibsen's *Doll's House* is being played at the Hebrew theatre.

" A Hebrew theatre ?"

" A little touring company, with small resources, but making the best of them. You see, we Jews can't live without spiritual food."

The cinema is the theatre, and, as the play had begun, we had to wait: neither love nor money could get the door opened for us: so we sat on the steps and studied the Hebrew play-bills on the opposite wall. Oh, how these sculptured and solemn letters intimidated me in my childhood, when my father would decipher ancient manuscripts, or when I saw them engraved on the tombs in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, so that the Holy One of Israel—who reads only Hebrew—may call every man of His scattered flock by his biblical name !

At last the door is opened, but not a seat is to be had ; however, my guide finds friends to take us into their box.

And up goes the curtain. Naturally, poverty-stricken scenery, but how Scandinavian ! And,

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whether because I knew the piece, or because of the force and intensity of the presentation, I, who knew not a word of Hebrew, understood it. And this language that I had thought guttural, harsh, like Arabic—what subtle inflexions, what infinite nuances almost like melodious Italian!

The hall is full of Chalutzim and Chalutzoth. All day they work at carting sand, metalling the roadway, transporting coal; and that was for Eretz-Israel. But in the evening they fulfil an obligation to their own souls; they want to go to sleep with a beautiful picture, a deep thought; and, perhaps, who knows but that they hope to find forgetfulness of their hard labour in Judæa. All are simply dressed, but with extreme cleanliness. The men wear American shirts, open at the chest: the women pretty, white muslin blouses. Among them I recognised some whom I had already met. In their hair, fresh-cut flowers or combs of shell. Some of the caste are Chalutzim, others, like Madame Berstein, come from the famous Moscow company which became so famous that the Slavs went to see their own dramatists presented in Hebrew. Madame Berstein, happily, escaped from the Bolsheviks. Lately, she has been playing in her own *Israel*, and in the *Dame aux Camellias*.

A marvellous moonlight awaited us outside. Ash-taroth floods us with milky light, and we go up to the one-time villa of the German consul, sonorous biblical phrases still humming in our ears.

CHAPTER IV

GALILEE

At last the way is clear; the Americans have left Tiberias for Jerusalem. Swiftly we journeyed to the land of Galil, to Galilee the beloved, on a road so excellent that one thought one must be in France.

"It is a Chalutzim road," says my guide with pride; "their roads stretch from Dan to Beersheba. At first the British administration brought in Egyptian labourers, but they couldn't make roads; now, most public works are entrusted to the Chalutzim of the *Gedud Havoda*, the Battalion of Labour. And, look! this bridge is also their work. Previously, the road was carried away each winter: one could motor only in the dry season. For this stream, to-day so tranquil, is the famous Kishon which, you remember, we have already met on the way to Acre. Swelled by torrential rains, it has not only engulfed the four hundred and fifty priests of Baal, but all the Canaanitish army of Sisera: and you must know Deborah's canticle:

The river Kishon swept them away,
That ancient river, the river Kishon.

That ancient river! Ancient over three thousand years ago! How names and habits last in this land!

"We leave it its name, because it is Hebrew, but the Chalutzim are changing its habits. For not only in winter did it carry away the roads, but in summer it made of all this fertile plain a deadly swamp. The Arabs abandoned it long since, and a German colony, decimated by fever, had to give up too. The J.N.F. (Jewish National Fund) bought up the land. If you come back in two years' time you will be able to stroll

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in a eucalyptus forest. But just look how they are working !”

And our car slows down in front of a group of young men, head and torso bare, standing up to the waist in a trench in the mud, while at the side young women carry away basketfuls of clay.

“ They are digging a canal ; it is the hardest kind of work. You can be certain that they are educated people. *Will* is so much stronger in them ! I believe I recognise a Doctor of Law who fought against the Bolsheviks.”

“ Are your Chalutzim, then, invulnerable ?”

“ No: but, as I have said, they offer the sacrifice of their life when they come here. So many of their kindred in Russia perish daily, without purpose or hope ; while here the Chalutz at least knows why he dies. And, moreover, the Jew becomes acclimatised in Palestine better than any European. He seems organically related to the earth. As soon as he comes he takes root. He even goes bare-headed in the sun, while the Arab covers himself up. And the pioneer devotes strict attention to hygiene, soaks himself in quinine, and never settles on land before it has been thoroughly drained. Behold the tents of the gedud !”

And he pointed out, on a hill, flashing forth from an olive grove, a hundred little canvas houses.

“ Would you like to see them ?”

We left the motor, and climbed up a carpet of flowers towards the camp.

In front of us passed a very young Chalutz, beautiful as Uriel in his Arab veil, but shod with seven-league boots, driving asses carrying water.

At the camp entrance was a baking oven, with two robust, laughing girls in white blouses, their arms in

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the dough; opposite was the kitchen, where two other girls were peeling potatoes; a little way off, yet another, thin and pale, was bending her shepherdess-curls over a sewing-machine, in the shade of an olive. We hear singing and whistling; at the window of a booth a Chalutz in a Russian cap was mending shoes.

They took no notice of us, going on with their work.

"They have seen so much since their exodus! Their curiosity is sated——" and my Zionist goes off to seek someone less indifferent to us.

He returns with a comrade, whose high Slav forehead and smile of pleased bitterness make him look like Baudelaire. He speaks to him in Hebrew. He replies: "*Ken! Ken! Tov! Tov!*" (Yes, yes; certainly, certainly), and consents to show us over the camp.

The organisation is definitely military: an infirmary with very white beds and very clean nurse; on her veil the hexagonal star; chemist's store, clothing-store, boot-store, food-store, douche-room, refectory—the last decorated with portraits of the prophet of Zionism, Herzl, and the great modern Hebrew poet Bialik.

Outside, in the trees, hammocks swing: a Chalutz sits reading.

"The gedud is in vacation," says our informant in Hebrew to the engineer, who translates. "We worked so well on the *Kwish* (road) that the Government gave us a month's holiday. Some are using it to tour all over Palestine on foot: others are staying here to rest: some have gone on a jaunt to the marshes—perhaps you passed them on your way here"—and the Chalutz gives us his Baudelairean smile.

"How do we live? . . . In absolute community. Each of us receives from the Public Works Department

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twenty piastres daily (about four shillings sterling). We give it to the common fund; and that has to provide for everything . . . sometimes it leaves a pretty narrow margin, but what matter!" This with a charming lightheartedness.

"Are we happy? . . . surely! We are free, we are equal. We are all working to the same end: to prepare the future for the remnant of Israel. . . . So how could we not be happy? Isn't the very countryside of a biblical sweetness; and these tents, are they not the tents of Jacob? . . . Will you inspect them? . . . Look!" He draws back a doorpiece: "Two beds in a tent for the wedded, three for celibates!"

We enter the dwelling of a spotlessly clean and tidy household: a little white bed on each side of the tent-pole, and at the other end, on a petrol-can covered by an embroidered cloth, wild flowers in a jam-pot.

"They are newly married. There is much giving in marriage this year, here," our guide explains.

In another petrol-can, now a book-case, are Russian, Polish, Hebrew works.

"And so you carry *books* with you?"

"They are the only things we do take with us. And the want of them is our greatest hardship. We can't live without books."

In another tent, a tent of three pioneers, in the shade of a venerable olive-tree, a very eclectic library: Heinrich Heine's "Buch der Lieder," Shakespeare's works, Nietzsche's "Beyond Good and Evil," a Molière, and Ernest Renan's "Life of Jesus."

"Heavens! the 'Life of Jesus' here!"

"Yes, why not? We much admire 'your' Renan. I have read 'The Life of Jesus' in Hebrew; but our friend can read the French. She studied in Paris."



AIN-HAROD.

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"Where is she?"

"She has joined another gedud. She is breaking stones on the *Kwish*."

As we went out, I seemed to see the shade of Ernest Renan, seated like a patriarch at the foot of the olive, and smiling on this camp of pioneers. . . .

We set forth once more. The country grew more luxuriantly green, but more abandoned.

Oats, wheat, immense, spreading sheets of grasses, almost devoured by flowers, by the marvellous flowers of spring which quick-coming summer will change to inextricable weeds.

In the distance are the mountains of Nazareth, calm and tender, grouped about Tabor, the Queen of this land of Galil, and beyond again, hard, despotic, ever-present, old Hermon, with its snowy crown, too sparkling for this soft country.

Here and there, on slopes of hillocks, witnessing to a scanty human life, cubes of white stone, or mud-houses, scarcely noticeable, and seeming to wish to sink back into the earth whence they are come.

"There is room enough here for dozens of Arab villages and as many Jewish colonies. And the newspapers say we want to despoil the inhabitants of their lands! In reality we have to buy, very dearly, territory they are giving up and which, without us, would be condemned to certain death. We shall never have enough money to buy up all the waste land!"

We travel upward continually: our road turns sharply and now, suddenly, at a great height, in the clouds almost, there appear convents, churches, belfries, a whole religious architectural mass seeming to dispute the primacy of the sky. It is Nazareth. Below, in a

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hollow of the mountain, the road is being metalled. We have to get out of our motor and climb up a slope, whereon stands an encampment of navvies, tents, tools, steam-rollers.

"They, too, are Chalutzim of the Battalion of Labour. But here they are differently organised. They work on their own account. American comrades have sent them all their equipment. They are at the same time both workmen and contractors. At the last inspection and audit they lost money. They must now make it up, so instead of eight hours a day they work nine."

Truly, they were straining at the task, straining under a torrid sun, in a blinding dust. Bare-headed, the hair thrown back, some seem John-the-Baptists in boots, others musicians doing hard labour. And gaily they sing the song of the *Kwish* :

I am a Chalutz
A Chalutz of Poland,
I have no more boots
But a black, black task. . . .

New verse :

I am a Chalutz
A Chalutz of Poland,
In Erez-Israel
Ah ! how I love my black, black task !

Alongside the road, sitting on a heap of stones, two girls are breaking flints. One is so sunburnt that she seems a gipsy, but the other, still very fair, probably a novice, is charming, her head in a biblical veil. She must have bruised her fingers, for a blood-stained handkerchief covers a swollen hand.

But, none the less, she goes on breaking flints, singing with enthusiasm :

I am a Chalutz
A Chalutz of Poland. . . .



NAHALAL: AFFORESTATION—AN OLD OAK FOREST

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Is it, perhaps, the girl who studied at Paris and read 'The Life of Jesus'?

I dare not ask, but I smile at the malicious fate which has made Jews prepare the way to Nazareth for Christian pilgrims.

And, suddenly, there came to my mind a very similar landscape, in a quite other country, in the Tunisian desert. There a battalion was working at an equally black task: but they did not sing. Warders kept guard over them, revolver in hand. It was a penal battalion.

And thou, poor Chalutz, thou dost of thine own free-will, singing, the labour of the condemned. May the stones of thy way lead thee to Zion!

Nazareth is a little town, quite dominated and crushed by the mass and number of its convents; a little town, Arabic in its dirtiness, European in its tiled roofs.

On its slopes there are still lovely gardens with green freshness; but they only make the red roofs a degree more hideous.

The hotel, sombre and overhung, is in German hands. In the War it was the headquarters of Liman von Sanders, whom the British troops all but caught here. A century earlier, on the same site, was the modest Greek hostelry whither came General Junot after Cana and Napoleon Buonaparte after his victory at Esdraelon. But to-day Nazareth languishes. It has lost the main resources of its prosperity: the caravans from Damascus via Tiberias and Acre, and, above all, those thousands of Russian pilgrims who for three months used to wander over the Holy Land, and spend a lifetime's savings on a cross, a medal, a relic, or on onions and vodka at the grocers'.

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In those days—that is, eight years ago—Jews were forbidden, on pain of death, to go into the town where was born the Best of their race. Now Nazareth is poor, and would gladly traffic. It would like to sell its houses, its gardens, its pious foundations, the half of its possessions to the Zionists. And the Nazarenes smile on the Jews.

Immediately after lunch we left to visit several colonies of Galilee; not on horseback, but by motor; for there is not a Jewish farm without some sort of cart-track leading to it.

And still, stretching away to seeming infinity, the same billowing fields, the same soft horizons, ranged about Tabor, whose very ancient holiness was due, according to Renan, to its resemblance to a girl's breast.

Always the same green solitude of trembling oats and stiff wheat-stalks, invaded by flowers of tender shades: rose, mauve, pale yellow, bordered by a royal hedge of blue thistles, so high and proud that they often tower over our motor. . . . Gradually, however, the charming wilderness disappears; the wheatfields take on the monotonous civilised look; only the hedges of blue thistles remain, for the acanthus leaves are an excellent fodder. . . .

And now we come to a "High Place" on a hill, a little coppice we could have believed sacred, were it not, alas! for those red tiles which so often spoil in Galilee the biblical associations and the gentle softness of its features.

It is Sedjerah—the trees—one of the first of the colonies founded by that modest and admirable philanthropist, Baron Edmond de Rothschild. A con-

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glomeration of houses all alike, which would be banal without the rocky ground and the wonderful trees which sway, which tremble, which hang down their locks like a Magdalen's hair, eucalyptus and weeping-pepper. And the house of the Director, a charming homely manor-house, withdrawn beyond a courtyard, so full of pepper-trees that they seem a solid mass, aromatic and shimmering.

And . . . but is it a hallucination come from my childhood days? Up above, on a wooden balcony, waiting to receive us, is an old *Matouska*; one of those "little mothers," kindly old Russian pilgrims with light blue eyes, who took me on their laps in the "Russian Buildings" in Jerusalem!

She has the same mystical gaze, the same white head-dress, tied under the chin, floating triangular behind her.

We exchanged the Hebrew greeting—and the conversation stuck.

"Is she really a Slav?" I asked.

"Yes, from the Caucasus. She belonged to the Russian sect of Sabbatists, who read the Bible, and held their Sabbath on Saturday. They were on good terms with the Jews, and when the latter were so horribly persecuted in 1880 many Sabbatists were converted to Judaism, won by the desire to suffer, and as a protest. Baron de Rothschild, who needed good husbandmen, brought them over to his colonies. The experiment has been successful from that point of view, but, although of a stronger race than ours, and used to the hard toil of the fields, these *gerim* (prose-lytes) find the climate very difficult to bear, and are less resistant than a poor little Jew whose childhood has been in the Ghetto."

"What is she called?"

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“ Sarah, naturally, and her husband, Abraham. Formerly, she was probably Catherine, and he Alexander.”

The old woman saw we were speaking of her: “ *Njet Kharoch, njet Kharosh—Katinka!*” (No, no, not Catherine). And to convince us that she is a good Jewess, she goes in search of her *sidor* (book of prayers) printed one side in Russian, the other in Hebrew.

Thrice daily she says her eighteen prayers, and none is more particular about the ritual prescribed. Only, Allah—she puts her finger on her tongue—He has refused her the gift of Hebrew.

And she repeats, in a jargon half Arabic and half Russian, that she is *mizrachi ketir mizrachi* (very orthodox), that every *Pesach* (Easter) she goes to *Yerushalayim* to kiss the *Kotel Ma’arabi*, and to talk, on Wednesday after the new moon, with the holy matrons, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah.

She is delightful indeed, this old matouska, who goes on the Wednesday after new moon to talk in Russian to the sainted matriarchs, at the foot of the Wailing Wall! . . .

As we left we met her son, a fine fellow of thirty, born in the colony: the typical moujik, speaking Hebrew fluently.

And I thought of the immense Russian Empire, of the aged and broken-down Slav oak, whence this offshoot has come to send down its roots into the eternal sources of Judaism. What new stem of Jesse will grow up from this seed?

We pass by the school, a pretty, quite new building, with the flat roof that ought to be universally adopted. It is the play-hour. The children play in the garden outside, waiting to be called in, one by one, to a special

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clinic where a woman doctor, in a white blouse, examines their eyes.

This oculist is ravishing; young, fresh, with fine movements, and so reassuring when, delicately, she touches the inflamed eyelid.

“The ravages of trachoma among the children in Palestine are terrible: it must be continually combated. When I came here, a year ago, there were at least thirty per cent. afflicted. We have been successful in reducing that to seven or eight per cent. But the least negligence brings the trouble back again. See my registers! Every fortnight I visit each colony in Upper Galilee. I write out prescriptions, which a trained nurse resident in each colony is, alone, to apply. Every other week another doctor comes, a specialist in diseases of the skin . . . in vermin. Those are the great plagues of childhood in Palestine; except for them, all this little world is very well. The mortality is almost *nil*.”

Soon, soon, yet more colonies!

I saw so much in two days that I cannot remember the names. One I do remember because of its pretty white inn, and a succulent *fricassé* of goose! Another, at the foot of Tabor, because the Beduins of Transjordan had raided the cattle. And yet another, because there, before an enlarged photograph, I was told the story of the new hero of Zionism, Joseph Trumpeldor, whom the Chalutzim regard as a second Judas Maccabæus.

He was born in the Caucasus, the son of a Nikola-jewitz—that is, of one of those old grouzers whom Nicholas I. had taken for his guard. It was a corps renowned for its bravery and iron discipline, acquired by twenty-five years' servitude. And, nevertheless, it was composed solely of Jews, of poor little Jews who

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had been borne away from their parents by Cossacks, taken to the other end of Russia, and put in the charge of peasants who were told to feed them well, make them work on the land, and sing songs in honour of their "Little Father," the Czar.

When they had grown into splendid young fellows, in whom no one would have recognised the children of the Ghetto, they entered military service: twenty-five years later they were discharged, with the title of Russian citizen, the right to work a holding of their own, and permission to marry, at will, Jew or Russian.

Joseph Trumpeldor was the son of one of these old soldiers; that is as much as to say he had no fear of war. But he began by studying law. The Russo-Japanese War broke out: he volunteered, was promoted an officer, and left behind him an arm. He came back loaded with decorations, but departed to Palestine, where he organised the first colonies on a military model, and himself, with his one arm, worked on the land. The European War saw him back in Russia as a volunteer, then, as a suspect, thrown into prison. Managing to escape, he was appointed a captain in the Zion Mule Corps, fought in Gallipoli, and returned to Palestine after the British occupation. Back to the plough, he founded the "Army of Labour" as it exists to-day, and was killed defending *Tel-Hai*, "The Hill of Life," a little farm in the far north of Galilee, against Beduin marauders.

CHAPTER V

“ THE SPACES OF THE LORD ”

GREAT, green undulations: vast rolling country which turns into fields of oats and corn—supple, trembling fields which the wind of our motor, as it rushes by, bends into waves: into armies of courtiers bowing, or pious crowds bending in devotion; while alongside the track the high, blue thistles with acanthus leaves close the ranks, true soldiers on parade. . . .

In the distance is a microscopic red and white spot: Merhaviah, “ The Spaces of the Lord,” floating in green and infinite tranquillity.

It is a modern colony, built ten years ago: a great quadrilateral, crowned by tiles, a great portal, a great farmyard, full of agricultural machinery, stacked round a reservoir pumped by an aero-motor.

Nobody about. Everyone in the fields not bothering about us. We sit in the shade of an acacia, and watch magnificent chickens digging up the sand to bury themselves. At last a cart comes in, weighed down with lucerne, fresh French lucerne, which gives out the scent of the young crops.

“ Shalôm ! ” calls my Zionist.

“ Shalôm ! . . . *Bon jour*,” and from the seat there jumps down a big young man with a quite French face.

Dressed *à la Far West*, he is a Belgian who has studied agricultural science with my guide at Montpellier. And he recognises me, too. I am at once proud and embarrassed to find that he knows that I am “ the Little Daughter of Jerusalem.” He understands why we are come, and with a gay eloquence:

“ Our colony is based on the co-operative system. We buy our material and share our income in common.

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But when work is over each man may live apart. There at the bottom you can see our houses, divided into one or more rooms for celibates and couples. Men and women are absolutely equal. We all have the same rights or, rather, the same duties. There is here neither leader nor followers. There is an accountant, and with him men who have special knowledge or a great experience of the country form a committee to distribute work. They are elected by their comrades, who submit willingly to the authority of mind, the only sort known here. . . . I, for instance, am a cattleman. Would you care to see my cows ?”

And the Belgian takes us into a fine, large stable, built on the Flemish plan, where beautiful beasts are isolated, each in its own box.

“Aren’t they fine?” says the colonist proudly. “Well, those are just the ordinary cows of Damascus and Beyrouth that you see straying about, thin and scraggy, giving milk only six months in the year, when they can feed on grass. *Our* cows give milk from one end of the year to the other, and I can count on two or three gallons a day. Of course, we give them green fodder. . . . You saw my lucerne ? We stack it in the barns and compress it for the winter.”

As he talked, I looked at a Hebrew inscription on an enamel plaque hung in front of each box.

“What are they ? Talismans ?”

He laughed.

“No, their names. . . . Here is our bull *Goliath* : this fine royal cow, *Jezebel*. *Mosche* (little Moses) is this little calf, because he was saved from the reservoir. Here, again, is Red, Black, Dapple . . . you see, the names are not so different from Europe’s.”

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“ Names of cows in Hebrew ! ” My eyes fixed themselves on the kabalistic signs. And, truly I confess I was a little scandalised at this stable familiarity with the language of the Psalms.

The Belgian gave a frank, hearty laugh.

“ Aha ! God has had many other familiarities ! But I understand your susceptibility. And it is the grievance, too, of the ultra-orthodox, who accuse us of profaning the language of the Bible, which for them is purely liturgic. For Zionists, on the contrary, it is a duty, a vow to speak Hebrew : and I assure you it is not easy, above all for those of us who knew nothing when we came here. But we wish at all costs to have done with the horrible jargon, *Yiddish*, which has no reason to live, and which yet was our common speech. For how shall we understand one another, we who speak the many languages of the earth ? This colony, for instance, is in itself a ‘ Galilee of the Nations. ’ Here are Americans, Roumanians, a Finnish girl, Tchecko-Slovaks, and Palestinians. What more natural than that we should all speak Hebrew, since we are all Jews ? When all Jews speak the same language—and it is a beautiful, classical language—we shall at last be a nation, we shall have deserved our Fatherland.”

And the pleasant blue eyes of the Belgian farmer lighted up with gentle ecstasy.

“ Now, come and see our poultry ! This lady looks after them, a Californian. You can talk to her in French. I must leave you, to unload my lucerne.”

The Californian is a large young woman of athletic build, with short hair.

She has been here for two years, brought by a brother who came with the Jewish Legion : he fought

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at Gallipoli, then on the Suez Canal, then in Palestine. And from Captain in His Majesty's Forces he has become a colonist in "The Spaces of the Lord."

She holds up bunches of beetroot at the meshes.

"Beetroot, you know, is excellent for chickens! They can't have too much . . . here is my incubator! It can take 500 eggs; we bring up the chicks by the warmth of this lamp. . . . We have all sorts of poultry, as varied in nationality as ourselves. But I believe those particular little chicks are beginning to chirp in Hebrew. Have you noticed how Arab cocks go 'cock-a-doodle-do' in quite a different way from our civilised cocks? They make a strident, shrieking noise: I think they know themselves aliens in Israel"—and the witty Californian makes a spritely bow.

"Shalôm! I must go back to my chickens; and, besides, there is the housekeeper, if you would like to see our home—Miss S., an American." And she leaves us to a fair, shy young woman.

"I have no special ability," she explains in English, "so I see to the housekeeping. There are four of us on the job. By turn we do the cooking, the washing, make the bread, and look after the general household management. First of all, I'll show you my flat; I have three rooms, for I am here with my husband and two children." And she took us into rooms of absolute cleanliness, very prettily decorated with garlands of carved flowers on the walls.

"My husband has done all that. He was a decorative artist in Chicago."

"What brought you to Palestine? The Jews are not persecuted, are they, in America?"

"Of course not! And from the material point of

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view we were far better off there. My husband earned a handsome and easy living, whereas the work in the fields is very hard for him.”

“ Then why ? ”

She blushed a little.

“ It’s difficult to explain. I think America is too new a country for us. We don’t take root there: we are never really ‘ at home.’ We were popular there, but aliens, *goyim*, while here, as soon as we landed, we felt ourselves in our own land, and it is the non-Jews who are *goyim*. And, too, in America my children didn’t thrive. They were for ever bending over books: here they live in the open air and run about in the sunshine.”

“ Isn’t it, all the same, really a religious feeling which brought you ? ”

“ Not exactly, for the Zionists are not religious or, rather, not ritualists. In our colonies you will see neither synagogue nor rabbi. And if we do keep the Sabbath, it is to distinguish ourselves from the peoples who live about us. We wish it known that we are Jews. . . . No, it isn’t a religious question; it is a matter of sentiment. Here, alone, we live as we choose; here, alone, we feel that we have a native land.”

How touching they are, these two phrases, so simple and so pathetic, and said with such tender hope ! I have heard them before; I shall hear them again, and each time they shake me a little. Adonai ! Adonai ! Mayest Thou never deceive Thy Zionist idealists. Mayest Thou cherish Thy delightful dreamers !

“ Here,” she tells me, “ is the home of a young Roumanian girl who, with her own savings, fled from her family.”

A vast divan, covered with tapestries and cushions

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transforms the room into a pleasing boudoir. It is decorated with water-colours, and against an arm-chair is a mandolin and a violin.

“ A musician ? ”

“ Yes, but now she is looking after the soup.”

And at that moment the girl herself came up behind us in noiseless sandals. She is quite young, and extremely pretty, with violet eyes under long lashes, auburn hair, and a charmingly romantic and decided way with her.

Why are you come here from distant Roumania ? I asked myself. Is it really for the love of Zion ? Is it not rather for love of adventure, for love of the fine romance which is beginning here, of the new poesy which will greet the youth of Israel in the new-found Promised Land ? O Maiden, will you stand to your course through the years ?

Our Belgian friend comes back to take us to the refectory, where the colonists, home from the fields, are at tea. Many of them had come with the Jewish Legion, which rendered such good service to the British Army. Many of their comrades died, in every part of the country, in the terrible struggle for the possession of ancient Judæa.

And the survivors, God knows, can dig trenches and use arms ! Not, certainly, against the settled Arabs, with whom, despite all that is said in Europe, they live in friendship. But against the robber bands, the nomads of Transjordan, who try to steal the fat cattle. Then there is need for sharp shooting, and the Chalmutz does not miss his man ! But afterwards, how they are respected, and what tranquillity ! For these are comic-opera Beduins, who only attack farmers presumed defenceless.

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And the pioneers laugh as they bite their fine teeth into slices of good white bread, warm from the oven where Rachel from Flanders has just finished baking.

We drink Jezebel's milk, and savour orange marmalade made by an Englishwoman, wife of the accountant.

“ Do you know we are on a Napoleonic battlefield ? Kléber's army, reduced to three thousand effectives, was massed over there on the plain of Esdraelon, attacked from all sides by the Turks. But, suddenly, gunfire is heard from the direction of Acre: Buona-parte debouches from the heights of Nazareth: the French soldiers roll back the Mamelukes, and the Kishon, the river of old, bears away in its torrents the Turkish army, as it had borne away the Canaanitish army of General Zizera. . . . It was from the hill of Afule that Napoleon directed operations.”

It was getting late: our guide says it is time to leave. I felt really sorry. Galilee of the Nations had been so *sympathique* ; and just then there came in two Palestinian pioneer girls, two sisters, both betrothed. we were told, to two of the pioneers of the *Gedud Havoda*, whom we had met at the gate of Nazareth, singing the song of the Kwish. . . .

Nearby, another colony, which might have been an annexe and called, too, “ The Spaces of the Lord,” so infinite seems its sweep of view. It is actually called Balfouria, and was founded, as its name would imply, in honour of Lord Balfour. Still very small, tents and huts only. A Californian greets us, after accepting delivery of a cartload of young trees, that were being despatched from the Jordan by another colony.

“ Five thousand almonds, to be planted up above, on rocky ground. The almond, olive, and carob like

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a stony soil. They need very little earth. In the year since we came we have planted eighty thousand trees. And we are keeping at it. On this high plateau, and again in the plain, another species is necessary, for the soil, through centuries of complete neglect, has reverted to clay. It is far worse than the rock! Nothing, absolutely nothing, can grow in this sticky stuff. But if one troubles to turn it up, at a depth of eighteen inches there is a perfect soil. We plant, after thorough digging, trees with very long and above all very wide-spreading and fine roots, such as the Russian acacia and the Aleppo pine. Their roots drive through the clay in every direction, breaking it and splitting it into small pieces. And when the fallen leaves mix in too, the clay is brought back to its earlier state, and at the end of a few years there is a fine soil for vegetables. And the acacia and pine have the additional advantage that, like all sweet-smelling essences, they are antiseptic, they fight malaria, and give us wood for industrial purposes—which otherwise is totally lacking in Palestine. . . .”

“ Would you like to see our machinery? It is our speciality; I don't think you could find any better in the world. It was sent by the American Zionists. Here we are Communists, we belong to the great Jewish Union of Labour. . . . Here, as well as afforestation, we go in for large-scale agriculture. Last year we sent hundreds of tons of wheat away. In this plain of Jezreel alone, if it were well cultivated and properly irrigated—and it has all the necessary natural resources—two million peasants could live comfortably. We are said to be despoiling the Arabs of their land. You have seen the sort of use they make of it! And, indeed, they know well enough that we

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alone can save them, them and their country, from utter ruin, and they are on friendly terms with us. I speak of the settled Arab peasants, the fellah. That the nomad Beduin, who comes to pillage villages and destroy the crops with his herds—that *he* should fight us is intelligible enough. He is the ancient Amalekite, he who destroys on principle. But on the day when the nomad shall have been forced to fix his abode and cultivate the fields, on that day we shall make peace with him: we will lend him our machinery, for always we are friends with the workers, no matter what their nationality.”

The sun was setting. Diaphanous mists rose from the plain. The soft mountains of Galilee became yet softer.

An angelic smile spread over the Californian.

“ What poesy ! and what silence ! How should we not be happy here ! We breathe in the very air of our forefathers: the Bible is all about us. Look ! there is Endor, where Saul consulted the witch: there, behind, those two spurs are Ebal and Gerizim, between which rested the Ark of the Covenant. On the right is Gilboa, where Saul and his three sons were slain, ‘ there the shield of the mighty was vilely cast away, the shield of Saul. . . . ’ Nearer us, there is Tabor, and behind, to the east . . . Hermon:

The north and south, Thou hast created them:
Tabor and Hermon rejoice in Thy name.

“ It is, verily, our land. Not one name changed in two thousand years ! Of what other country could you say the same ? There is not one spot which has no power to quicken the pulse, and calls up no memory of the Bible for us. Could you say the same of the other peoples who have inhabited it ?

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“In the Book of Splendour it is said that the Jews took with them the soul of Palestine when they left. They alone can bring it back, when they come back to live in this land: wouldn't you think so when you see these deserted countrysides? There where we settle, and there only, the soil comes again to life: are we not those of whom the Prophet speaks:

And thou shalt be like a watered garden,
And like a spring of water,
Whose waters fail not.
And thou shalt be called
The repairer of the breach,
The restorer of paths to dwell in.”

A cart came up, and there jumped down young men and women. Perhaps, in the past, these Chalutzim had fermented revolutionary ideas under their Russian caps. Now they were peaceable peasants, with the souls of poets. With bare feet, dressed in white and their heads in Arab veils, these girls had been perhaps “emancipated” dreamers and schemers of Nihilism. Now, in the softness of evening, one would have thought them biblical virgins, wise, obedient Ruths, coming from the deeps of time to people “the Spaces of the Lord.”

CHAPTER VI

TIBERIAS

AN early-morning departure from Nazareth. We wanted to get into Tiberias before the heat of the day; before the harsh light should have destroyed the poesy of the sublimest of all countrysides: the proudly named city; the sweetly named lake.

And we felt no regret at leaving Nazareth, a town dominated and terrorised by rival convents, upon whom she revenges herself by carrying on from one to another a great traffic in souls. For nowhere more than in Jesus' own land do people become converted with more ingenuity to the different Christian confessions. The ecclesiastical census has never exactly determined the number of these floating disciples of one or other creed.

There they are, the versatile dames of Nazareth, around the fountain of Sitteh Myriam (Lady Mary), dressed in the same flowing blue gown with long sleeves cut to a point as was worn by the mother of Jesus. They bear on their heads black pitchers of the same shape and pottery—but soon, no doubt, they will be more and more replaced by the hideous petrol-cans. Nearly all are pretty and of an extreme gentleness, these little water-carriers.

Their beauty, they say, is the gift of the Virgin, and one that makes them far more costly than the other Christians of the district. To-day, in fact, a Nazareth girl is priced at as much as £200.

Our road climbs between little white houses—there are still a few without Marseilles tiles—between little, very fresh gardens, where the green foliage of the grenadine is studded with coral roses.

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At the top of the mountain, near the Carmelite convent and its surrounding black cypresses, we stopped to get a bird's-eye view of the little town of which, probably from this same spot, Jesus shook the dust off his feet. Then, by the same path as Jesus took to the Sea of Galilee, a path which has been transformed into a road, we wound about among expanses of wheat, bordered by red bindweed, out among meadows of flowers of every shade and scent, so full of butterflies that one cannot tell whether wings or petals are flying about. . . .

Tiny birds rest on blue thistles; larks as lively as the light sing in delirious ecstasy; brown hoopoes bear on their heads Red Indian war-crests; and here and there sail by pensive storks, their rose-red beaks seeking out some mystery or other in the fields.

A few white villages, gleaming from gardens of vines and figs: then Cana, the little township of Jesus' first miracle: Cana, so hidden in an oasis of pomegranates, that we wonder whether the six pitchers of water were not really changed into pomegranate syrup.

More high plateaux, more green vastnesses with tingling lightness of life. Suddenly unknown flowers of dark blue, calm as a tranquil wave, and so thick, so compact, that from afar we could think naïvely that a bit of the Sea of Galilee had come up into the height to welcome us. And a delicious, indescribable scent rose up from the floral sea: a burning-sweet odour, like myrrh heated with honey.

O Galilean spring! Sweet-smelling serenity, far-spread tenderness! Thy hills bear dream-shapes, so delicate that one would think them draped in velvet, shrouded in finest silk. And emerald-pale, too, is this

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mountain of twin peaks: this Kurum Hattin which, nevertheless, saw at its feet one of the most tragic of battles, that which in a single day slew the flower of the Crusaders, and overthrew the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. . . .

And now we descend, still among flowers, among these unknown blue flowers whose claw-like corollas exhale a balm-like caress. But there are many basalt rocks, like pachyderms deep-sunken in the herbage. And along the road, too, the acanthus-leaved thistles are replaced by the black, porous stones of spongy lava. For we were going down into volcanic hollows, into mysterious depths, where, 250 feet below the level of the Mediterranean, lies the Sea of Kinnereth, that is to say, the Lyre, thus called because of the sound of its murmurings.

At last, the Lake of the Gospels, widening at each step! Surrounded by gentle hills which lie reflected in the celestial azure of the waves.

One more turn, one more descent, and behold, at a great depth beneath us, Tiberias, the city of Tiberius, built by Herod Antipas: all white beneath its bending palms, encircled as by a rusty bracelet by sombre ruined walls whose dismantled bastions and crumbling towers might be the barbaric gems.

And this town, and these palms, and this lake in the abyss, all is of such unexpected beauty, of so mournful a charm, that we sent the automobile on and sat down by the roadside to gaze on this pale sorcery, that a nearer approach, doubtless, would dispel.

Then, slowly, our eyes on the vision, we went down by a sheep-track, sweet with wild thyme.

Tiberias has grown very much in the last few years: it is no longer the "mass of ruins" of the

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guide-books. On the contrary, it looks out clean, well-repaired, and attractive from among its black, tumble-down walls. And outside the ramparts, too, it has expanded largely—one cannot see this from the heights—it has begun to climb the velvet slopes of a hill where, near the venerable sepulchres of Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Akiba, its dead have already gone before.

On the opposite hill, the one that rises from our path, there is yet another white, pointed town. But its houses are houses of canvas, which rustle in the morning breeze, near by great black machines. Well do we know these Tents of Jacob, these wandering homes of the Chalutzim.

“They are planning out the new Tiberias. The Jews want to leave the narrow, low-lying city to come up here, to breathe. It will be a magnificent city, more beautiful than that of Herod Antipas! Look at this street, at these pavements! The avenues will be eighty feet broad, and, naturally, will have tree-sheltered walks on each side. The whole hill belongs to the Jewish National Fund: the ground is let out in plots: soon building operations will begin. Look, there is the sand for the mortar, just coming in!”

And my Zionist points out dozens of carts in file, full of sand, and led by powerful fellows, their carters' whips on their shoulders.

“The sand is from the lake?”

“Yes, but not from this neighbourhood. Tiberias has no sands. It has to be brought several miles, from Magdala.”

“Magdala! The Magdala of Mary Magdalen?”

And, in a reverie, I gaze at these young men, who have brought sand from the beach where, perhaps, there stepped the dancing feet of the divine sinner.

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The hotel, were it not for the crowd of travellers, would be delightful. Built of grey basalt stone it has an austere look, to which the pepper-trees and aspens which tremble before the light verandah give the lie. Inside are white vaults, charmingly monastic, and from the windows stretches the most lovely landscape that can be in the world: the smiling lake, the velvet hills, the town with its flat roofs, dotted with palms and, right in the foreground, an old, old white Mosque, whose main dome is preceded by three little cupolas of three different shapes, guarded by three palms which sway and bend each in its own way. . . .

We walk in the maligned city.

The streets are narrow and tortuous in true Oriental style, but clean enough; and there are the delightful, ancient palms which suddenly, from a great height, over a wall, bend down to you, murmuring: Welcome! Welcome! Welcome!

Thank you, O Palms!

Some of the houses have roofs so grass-grown that one would think them little fields; others are entirely plastered in blue, so that when, unexpectedly, one sees them rise up at a turn of the street, one mistakes them for the lake.

The lake plays a great part in the life of Tiberias, and serves many purposes. The whole town goes down to it by little oval doors in the sombre ramparts, to wash its linen and its fish, to dispose of its rubbish, and to bathe: or to draw water in those horrible petrol-cans (I saw not a single pitcher) that the women, who are very prettily dressed all the same in yellow and red draperies, bear on their heads with a supple grace that deserves an amphora.

Little remains of the ancient town, although it was

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built with unusual splendour by the son of Herod the Great, and still further embellished, to flatter Titus, by Agrippa. Of Bernice's palace—the Bernice of St. Paul—nothing remains but a basalt mass: but near by are a few carved stones and a great stairway—of blocks joined up by iron bars—which must have led to the gallery whence Titus sprang to rejoin the Jewish princess. Titus! Bernice! The names are profoundly moving. But they seem so exotic in this Galilean lake, so little of the country. Surely she had become a stranger to her race, assimilated to Rome, the fair Idumean; else she had used her charms to stay the destruction of Jerusalem and the expulsion of the people of Israel!

In the evening we were informed that M. Morgestern, a celebrated Viennese cantor, would sing the inaugural canticle in the great synagogue of the Sephardim.

It has neither richness nor architectural beauty: only the large ogive windows are picturesque, overlooking the lake, near by an ancient pillar at whose side sways a young, flirtatious palm, murmuring the prayer of caftans and Levites.

I was obliged to climb up into the women's gallery, and I could only glimpse through a wooden trellis the Cantor, covered by his robe, his head bearing an episcopal mitre, psalmodying in front of the pulpit.

Around him a very heterogeneous crowd. For to-day Askhenazim and Sephardim are united. A flood of fur caps, narrow black turbans, red fezes, melon-shaped hats, broad-brimmed hats and, sparsely scattered among them, the Chalutz cap and colonist's headdress. And it was curious to us to see all these

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covered heads in God's House, all this headgear swaying to right and left, half-falling off, and being caught back again: for it is considered very irreverent to let the Lord see the cranium !

And each man prays to his own taste, just as he likes; some walk backwards and forwards, some lean against the walls; old men sit propped on the steps of the pulpits; and children come and go, pushing aside the worshippers, climbing on the banisters, as cheeky as sparrows in this Tabernacle of the Most High.

Finally, the Cantor mounts the pulpit steps, escorted by the priests and the *Chazonim* of the town, crowned with sable bonnets, and enveloped in sumptuous mantles.

He stands upright, his face toward Jerusalem. I can see him well now. He has a nice, clean-shaven face, and with his little black mitre and his surplice embroidered with silk like a chasuble, he resembles a Catholic dignitary.

And the canticle he sings, is it not a canticle of our Church? Some ecstatic hymn that the celestial Bride sends out to her Spouse?

"No: it is a Sabbath chant: it is the *Loshadod* of the great Hebrew poet Jehudah Halevy, the 'Zionist' of the Middle Ages, who was assassinated at the Wailing Wall at the very moment he realised his dream."

Heinrich Heine in his "Hebrew Melodies" has a paraphrase:

Come to thy well-belov'd,
To thy people who await thee,
O my serene Princess
Unveil the light of thy crownèd head,
Princess Sabbath ! . . .

All the lamps are lighted. The crown of Strength is resplendent above the lions of Judah; the crown of

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Law above the *Torahs*, and on the curtain of the Tabernacle there flames in letters of fire the "Name" that none may pronounce, the "Name" which is written "Jahveh," but is read "Adonai."

Come, beloved one, the bride,
To thy people who await thee. . . .

But is M. Morgenstern really singing *Hebrew*? How soft, melodious, and musical! How pure his voice! What mystical joyance: What splendour is in this liturgy that is heard, dressed in their finest, by the poor folk of the Ghetto whom Princess Sabbath has delivered from the week's black toil:

Come, beloved one, the bride . . .

Ever more impatient, ever more trembling, sounds forth the ecstatic appeal. . . . But, suddenly, the cantor seems no longer to be chanting a millienniary canticle: an opera of Wagner, rather; the air of Isolda, the delirious cry which rushes to the seven provinces of the sky.

Beyond the windows of the synagogue stretches the lake, calm and shining; but the palm trembles by the ancient pillar, it bows down, it waves its long leaves.

Come, beloved one, the bride
Waits already to uncover
To thine eyes her blushing face!

A local teacher takes us to the Chassidim synagogue where liturgies are disdained. . . .

It is very narrow and very low, perched, like the other, on the lake.

Here they pray with more fervour, with fury in fact. Some bow down gravely, others jump up and spin

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round; others rise and bend so automatically that one would think they were pumping up pneumatic tyres.

"Among the Chassidim," the teacher tells me, "grief is far deeper than among the Sephardim. They have suffered so much more! The Bolsheviks raged against them. They were shamed and persecuted as much as in the blackest Czarist days, not because they were Jews, but because they are Traditionalists; and now militant Zionism, in its turn, has come to ravish from them the Kingdom of God! . . ."

Already they have got through the eighteen prayers, and innumerable hymns. Now, in absolute silence, each recites very low, and with veiled face, the *Shema-Israel*, "The Lord is thy God, the Lord is One!" Then, all together, they sway and implore salvation for Jerusalem in high, insistent tones:

"Restore Thy divine Presence in Zion. Hasten to rebuild Jerusalem. Thou art Peace, Thy name is Peace. May the Peace of thy Name brood over Thy holy city!"

They wish one another *gut Shabbos!* Then all the Levites, all the fur caps, go out, lowering their eyes—lest they should chance to meet a woman's glance—between their long front hair and their overgrown beards.

We went out on to the balcony overlooking the lake. Below, among broken bits of columns, were the very ancient steps of the stairway that took Titus to the gallery where he visited Bernice.

"How did Bernice not prevent the destruction of Jerusalem?"

"She was more an idolater than a Jewess. She had lived for long in Rome. Do you suppose our fair Jewesses of Paris and London support Zionism?"

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We re-entered the synagogue. No one remained, no one save the old *shamas*, and the lighted lamps.

"They remain until to-morrow evening. And, according to the legend, the departed will come to pray in the synagogue on Sunday night."

I tremble. Something brushed past me. Was it Rabbi Meirs' beard, or Rabbi Akiba's surplice? And now I hear weeping.

"It is Bernice, repentant."

"No," says the teacher, "it is Kinnereth singing."

After dinner we climb up to the new Tiberias.

"On Friday evening they rest up there. Probably you will hear singing, and violins. There are some good Russian musicians among the Chalutzim. Sometimes they dance all night, till daybreak. It scandalises the ultra-orthodox down below, but soon, when they give up their ghetto and their aged robes, they, too, will adapt themselves to the new manners. We must do nothing hastily, but hope all will be well."

Going up the steep hillside we heard a beautiful Slav melody, soft and melancholy; and two Chalutzim pass us, carrying into Tiberias this European song. We enter a large hut, filled with a hundred pioneers, men and women, listening, with passionate attention and in absolute silence, to a man of lean, energetic countenance whose musician's hair falls over a thinker's forehead.

"No luck," whispers the engineer; "you will hear no singing this evening. But you are in luck, all the same; for this man is Kapelovitch, nicknamed the St. Paul of Zionism. At the beginning of the War he was imprisoned with Trumpeldor for his revolutionary ideas. On his release he was sent by Trotzky to help in the reorganisation of the Red Army. But he

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preferred to give his remarkable gifts to the service of Zionism."

We sat down on a seat beside two little girl pioneers, barefooted, with biblical veils wrapping their heads and fastening at the waist.

He is prodigiously expressive, this lecturer: one feels in him a soul on fire, that rushes forth in eloquence. Now he is grave and pathetic, and I see the little "Comrades" sit up, trembling: now, again, he is witty, for the whole audience laughs, and my neighbours, bent double, stamp their unshod Carmelite feet.

Whispering, my guide explains: "He is telling them how a Jerusalem artist drew him as a spider, with feelers in Palestine, America, the Netherlands. . . . He is thinking of putting one forth, to-morrow, to Scandinavia. The truth is that his activity is well-nigh incredible, and his power over crowds extraordinary. As soon as there is a difficulty, he is called in. He comes, and all is smooth once more. At one time Zionism was seriously threatened. It was splitting into innumerable groups, Socialists, Communists, Marxists, so busy over politics that they left off their work. Then Kapelovitch arrived. He reorganised the *Gedud Havoda*, where both politics and religion are taboo."

"*Hass ! hass !*" they say in front of us.

The speaker goes on in his abrupt, passionate style. I try to interpret his mimic gestures, then I look round the room. It is very prettily decorated with palm-branches and green garlands. Among these, the portraits we saw before, Herzl, Bialik, Achad Ha'am, and Trumpeldor, the hero of the Cholutz and the patron of the gedud.

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Now the hut shakes with merriment. My little neighbours laugh till they cry. And my friend takes advantage of it to explain:

“Kapelovitch has come to the budget of the Battalion, which, it seems, has spent too much. He reproaches them with their material appetites. They are still eating meat twice weekly, and cheese every day! What gluttony! What orgies! They must turn from their devotion to the fleshpots and adopt a more frugal menu. They must have no meat at all, and cheese only thrice a week!”

And with a great burst of laughter, the sacrifice was voted by young men and women whom one would have thought already at the limit of possible privations.

We went out into the camp where, beneath ancestral stars, the Tents of Jacob sleep peacefully.

From the hill the view extends in soft splendour: below, the old town, black, streaked with lights; the Sea of Galilee crossed by a silver bridge, to the left of the mountains of Gilead, winding up towards Idumea, and to the right, to the north, those lands of Zebulun and Naphtali: “The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light.”

Yes, one could indeed build on this hill one of the most delightful towns in the world. But why have two thousand years gone by before it was dreamt of, and why will this little group of scattered workers lay the first stone?

Kapelovitch comes up to us. His eyes glow like live coals in his idealist's brow.

“I have been the cause of a mischance, I understand. You came to hear singing, and you have had to put up with an unintelligible discourse! I am glad that a French citizen is interested in Zionism. Up

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to the present France has remained indifferent to our thirst for a nationality, to our mortal yearning to possess a corner of the earth where our exhausted dreaming may come to rest. And yet, France should have understood us, France, the most idealist of the nations. I know. . . . the old bogey has been brought out for her benefit; she has been told that Zionists are Bolsheviks and, quickly, she has turned from us.

“Bolsheviks! Ah, if we had wished to be Bolsheviks, we had only to stay with Trotzky! There was enough material for agitators over there, and workshops. But here! . . . look, Madame, look at these Chalutzim: do they look like vandals? Do they want to appropriate, by force, other people's goods? Their one thought is to rebuild. First of all a home for themselves—this month there have been six marriages, that is why this hall is so richly decorated. And next, we *work*. We have no concern in political or religious matters. We have but one God, Labour: but one cult, our Nationality: but one prayer, the work of our hands that will help us to rebuild Erez-Israel!”

CHAPTER VII

THE SHIP OF CONCORD

NEXT morning a sailing-boat took us to the other end of the exquisite little lake to Capernaum.

But the weather was so heavy and oppressive that we hardly moved, almost beaten into the waves by the sun; and the light was so harsh that the delightful hills changed their evangelic sweetness to Pharisaic rigidity.

The engineer is with me and a young colonist from Magdala, whom we met the day before at the synagogue. The mere fact that he was a compatriot of the divine sinner would, by itself, have made us sympathetic: and there was about him an unanalysable charm of intellectual ardour and simplicity.

Born like my guide at Rechoboth—"May God increase"—he himself had not been equally increased: supple, wiry as a jockey, sunburnt, his eyes sparkled with a taking idealism, while his mouth was pursed in sceptical lines. Physically strong, independent, full of audacity, he seems indeed of the new generation of the new Judæa. And he himself, briefly, tells us his history, floating there on the motionless sea:

While he was quite little, forays with Arab children over wheat-fields and vineyard-terraces: then the *Cheder*, from which he graduated an unbeliever. Study? No, he will not study: there are too many in Israel who bend over books: but he wants to travel over Europe, to see how its peoples live and work. France in particular attracts him: for the Jews it has always been the land of Napoleon, and of liberal ideas. One fine morning, knowing no language save Hebrew, he disembarks at Marseilles. But soon he picks up French, and goes on a wandering tour. At Lyons he

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works with the factory hands, at Maçon he tends vineyards, in Provence he is a field labourer: everywhere his quick, somewhat mocking mind assimilates every impression.

"But didn't you yourself want to become assimilated?" I asked.

"No. A Palestine Jew cannot live in Europe. Europe is pleasant to travel in. But try to settle down there, and you find yourselves in an alien land. Something stifles you, corrodes your soul, threatens your Jewish nationality. A true Jew can live in true inward peace in Erez-Israel alone. And yet I am in no way religious. You see me to-day, on the Sabbath, journeying in this boat. . . ."

Gently we glide by the shores of Kinnereth, cut up by little creeks, full of rushes and papyrus, which, perhaps, were once Dalmanutha, Bethsaida, Chorazim. . . . In the distance is a shore of wonderful green, the new Jewish colony of Migdal, the ancient Magdala: then, in the rounded part of the Lyre, Tabegha, "the Seven Springs," leaning on a velvet hill, the "Mountain of Beatitude," and, beyond all, a little, charming bay, with a few trees on the beach: Capernaum, the cradle of Christianity, chosen by the gentle Nazarene as the centre of his mission, and his dreams.

A single great wall. A single little door. We knock. After some little time, a worthy fat Franciscan opens partially and prudently. But as soon as he sees the colonist of Magdala he throws the door wide open and gives both hands to his "neighbour of the shores."

We entered an immense field of broken and tumble-down relics, a veritable *capernum* of carved blocks, of mutilated columns, capitals; and yet there was once such order and arrangement that one can still make out,

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if one looks hard, the plan of a large and handsome building, with colonnades and friezes.

"You know," says the good Bavarian to our Jewish friend, "you know that I don't understand much about these ruins; you will explain them much better than I; if you will excuse me, I will go back to my honey." And, striding over the blocks, his corded girdle flying out before him, the Franciscan Father disappears into a diminutive convent with three white cupolas. . . .

"The Franciscans discovered these ruins twenty years ago. They attributed them to the church of a converted Jew of the sixth century, the Count of Tiberias. But, through lack of funds to carry on their researches, the monks returned to Europe without completing the job. Immediately the Beduins who infest the country here, the *ghuarenieh*, came, destroying, mutilating, and scattering everything they could, as they always do, as soon as the hand of man has established something, for the pure love of destruction, and also in hopes of finding fabulous treasure. The Franciscans, hearing this, returned, reburied their finds, built a great wall, and planted trees in the ruins to distract curiosity. It was a lucky move. In the War their trees were cut down, but no excavations attempted, and as soon as hostilities were over, the monks recommenced their explorations on a new scale. Then the church was discovered to be a synagogue: one of the most beautiful in Palestine and probably contemporary with Jesus of Nazareth."

And the colonist explains the interior arrangements: the pulpit, the Tabernacle, the portico, and, there, the exterior stairway leading to the women's gallery, the *ezrath naschim*.

Among the carved blocks, admirably designed—

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alas! often very badly mutilated by the ghuarenieh hordes—some represent the customary *motifs* of this fertile plain of Genesar: bunches of grapes, clusters of dates, sheafs of wheat: intermingled with Greek styles, surmounted by the “Shield of David.” There is a solitary bas-relief, the Ark of the Covenant being carried in a cart drawn by unrecognisable beasts—oxen, no doubt: and, very significant for the date of the epoch, a *menorah*, the famous candelabra of Solomon, with seven branches, whose reproduction after the Fall of the Temple was forbidden. (It is replaced, to-day, by an eight-lamp model in the synagogues.)

“You see,” says our Magdalenian, quite carried away, “that this is no other than the synagogue attributed by St. Luke to the intervention of the Roman centurion and built, doubtless, by Herod Antipas, whom the Perochim reproached with his use of animals in the sacred designs. And in that case, it is indeed here that Jesus of Nazareth came on the Sabbath to expound the Book and heal the possessed.”

“Yes, yes, doubtless! There also our Lord revealed the sacred mystery of the Eucharist,” puts in the worthy monk in German. “Ah, my neighbour of Magdala understands the Gospels almost as well as I, whereas I know nothing of their Talmud, of their Gemora, as they say here. . . . But come, please to refresh yourselves at my table, and rest a little while.”

I turned back by myself to wander in the vast field, where a few cut-down trees sent forth shoots from the stump, where the artemis has spread a magnificent golden tapestry, with a heavy, acrid smell. Around me

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the hills reclothe themselves in their gentle lines and dream tints, and I ponder the hours spent by the little, peaceful, and short-lived group who forgathered in the cool of the evening to listen to the divine words of faith and love.

And perhaps this stone upon which I sit heard the little, simple phrase that was to change the Universe: "Love one another."

And had not this design inspired the charming parables and the naïf, poetic teaching? And had not this countryside participated in the Kingdom of God? How is it possible that every sign and trace of the Divine Master has been forgotten, abolished, and effaced: that not the smallest vestige of his ministry remains? Everywhere else in Palestine sanctuaries jostle one another, and in Nazareth, which he disliked, and which was only his corporeal birthplace, the sanctuaries are innumerable, but here, in "his town," in his spiritual home, nothing, neither church nor chapel nor altar . . . nothing, silence, death. . . .

How has Christendom, which gives hundreds of thousands to build a church, not thought of questioning this soil which, maybe, hides the most august evidences of its origin?

Only this synagogue, lately exhumed! But if it really had heard his voice, trembled at His miracles, would it not have been very differently treated—preserved from ruin? for Christianity triumphed in Galilee in the first centuries A.D.

There seems almost a supernatural reason for this abandonment. He who so loved this country cursed it in a bitter hour:

"And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell."

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To the dwelling-place of the dead ! The anathema has endured: unless, indeed, it be the puissance of a tender sorcery which, having destroyed the reality, wishes to leave only the memory, the impalpable beauty of an immortal poem.

And it is better so. What matter the carved stones ! They could bear witness only to material facts, while the tender sea and the perfume of the artemis inspire every heart to call up visions of the pastoral Gospel, to resuscitate the imperishable image of Him who said: " My kingdom is not of this world."

We set sail once more in the little craft, heavier this time by the weight of the Franciscan Father, who was going into Tiberias to fetch good wine for his fellow-monks.

At first our course is delightful over the transparent sea, which wafts us its freshness, and between the mountains which throw over us their angelic sweetness. The boatmen hoist sail, the wind drives us along, we pass as in dream Bethsaida, Chorazim, Magdala. . . . The little estuary of Capernaum disappears behind us. But all at once the lake, as if possessed by an insane impulse, breaks roughly, and short deep waves toss the boat.

" The Lake of Gennesaret is very dangerous, because of these sudden changes: they come to remind us of the time of our Lord, and our lack of faith," says the monk, crossing himself.

" Yes, tourist-boats are still wrecked pretty frequently: several people were drowned last year. Nothing in this land has altered. But have no fear for our fate this evening; we have a bad twenty minutes ahead, because we are getting a breeze from the plain of Gennesaret: as soon as we get in the lee of the

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promontory the sea will go down . . ." and the colonist from Magdala goes forward to the other voyagers at the prow.

The waves begin to come aboard.

I and the Franciscan Father take refuge in the hold to avoid a soaking. I hear him telling his beads.

Suddenly a song rises from the prow, a beautiful song of sonorous cadences and well-remembered melody.

It is the Volga boatmen's song, and yet the words are not Russian.

"It is in Hebrew," explains the monk; "it is the song all the Chalutzim sing on the lake."

My guide, too, has caught the air; he has a fine, deep voice; and now our Arab boatmen mingle their falsetto voices with the Zionist colonists!

"They have heard the song so often that now they know it."

And these Hebrew words, to this Slav melody, in this tempest—it is so strange, so unexpected, that we forget our fear in listening to the cadence:

Hajarden, Hajarden!
Ze nehar-erzenou.

And Kinnereth, too, listens, doubtless, to this bizarre cantata, for little by little it calms down: the sailors take up their oars once more, still chanting:

Hajarden, Hajarden!
Ze nehar-erzenou.

And I think of the strange medley on our boat: two Zionists, three Mussulmen, the Franciscan Father—we later learnt with sorrow that he died from snake-

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bite three months after our visit to Capernaum—and I,
all singing fraternally the refrain of the Dispersed:

Hajarden, Hajarden!

The Volga joins the Sea of Galilee: Tiberias shines
on the waters; our vessel is a symbolic vessel: it is the
Ship of Concord which comes joyously to port.

CHAPTER VIII

MEN OF GALILEE

WE set forth again to visit colonies on the southern shore of the lake, going by a fine Chalutz road, which unites Tiberias to Samach station, whence the railway goes to Haifa and Damascus.

At the exit from the city are a few basalt blocks, "Bernice's Castle," then some very ancient Jewish cemeteries where, in tombs garnished and made sweet with oil, the great Hebrew academicians sleep, the famous Doctors of the Law: the Rabbis Akiba, Eliezer, Johanan, and many others who spent their lives building up hedges of ritual, raising walls of tradition, to keep the Chosen Race separate, in its dispersion throughout the world, from the *goyim*.

A little further along is El-Hummâm, a group of white cupolas, the curative springs praised by Pliny and Josephus, and much appreciated by officers of the British Army who, often in twenty-four hours, cured rheumatism and paralysis contracted during the War. I went in by myself: but some women, hearing men's voices outside, uttered despairing cries from a pretty Roman bath where, in thick steam, they were bathing "en famille." I reassured them, and myself glowed with the delicious warmth, which soon became so suffocating that I had to retreat. The sulphurous water gushes out at 62° Centigrade, and if these baths were properly fitted up, they would alone make the fortune of Tiberias.

Above it, cut into the rock-face of the hill, is another group of picturesque cupolas: a synagogue and rabbinic school where young Levites still come to give themselves to the study of the Talmud and Kabala

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Here, we are informed, the first great academy was transferred under Hadrian from Jamnia, and was directed by Rabbi Juda Ha Kadosh (the Holy), the author of the *Mishnah*, which later, with the Gemara, formed the Tiberias Talmud.

Hither, too, came St. Jerome to learn Hebrew from Rabbi Johanan, and read the Bible texts, to whose translation he consecrated his life on his return to his grotto at Bethlehem.

And we stood amazed that the learning of a whole world should have come from these old walls. . . .

We continued our journey along the lake festooned with little headlands, covered with rose-laurels, where Zebu cows were grazing, and a little Beduin played his flute to them, while near the shore vessels with mother-of-pearl sails glide by, and the rose reefs of Samach, perhaps the ancient Tariskeh, are reflected in the water like a colonnade of porphyry.

In the distance the hills of Gaulanitis deploy their harmonious lines; larks pass above our heads, praising their heavenly Father: such peace, such gentleness is about us that were it not for the noise of our motor, we could believe ourselves in Apostolic times. . . .

We follow a path through fields, bordered by flowers, across market-gardens, orange-groves, greenhouses, nurseries, and behold! we are in a wondrous domain, at Bethany, "The Gardens," a great experimental colony of Edmond de Rothschild. The charming Director, who, like all the philanthropist's agents, was educated in France, tells us that this property when bought thirty years ago was a hideous marsh, called *El Sakhne*, Fever, by the Arabs, who believed that even the birds who drank its waters died.

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“ Look at it now: we have brought back the soil to its primitive prosperity. For its ancient name, Bethanie, “ The Gardens,” is its biblical designation. It is mentioned in the New Testament, too. John, and then Jesus, baptised here. . . . If you care to inspect the plantations . . . We go in here, above all, for the acclimatisation of foreign trees, and the improvement of those native to the country. For example, the olive bore fruit in Arab hands only after fifteen years. ‘ I shall die before then,’ and they gave up planting it. Our olives bear at the end of six years. And the Arabs come to us for young trees: needless to say, we never refuse. Oranges and almonds are the same and, above all, dates, which had almost disappeared from these regions where once, nevertheless, they had been the staple. Another very interesting tree is the carob, which, perhaps, was the famous ‘ Oak of Basan ’ of our ancestors. It has the hard wood of the oak: and the long, twisted, flat pods—you know them, like goats’ ears—these pods make excellent fodder, while the carob, although it throws a very dense shadow, allows cereals to grow right up to its trunk, whereas eucalyptus prevents anything from growing in a radius of nine times its own shade. . . .

“ Here are our artichoke fields. With this plant it happened as with the soil. Of Arab origin—as its name indicates, *ardilshok*, thorn-of-the-earth—it has gone back to its wild state to such an extent that the natives know it only in its primitive form, the blue thistle that you see almost everywhere, whose leaves served as the basis of the Corinthian capitals. Our artichokes will be prize specimens for Damascus and Beyruth. . . .

“ Up to now we have used the plain—you can see its

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extent! This year we are beginning to reafforest the slopes, and when the Falls of the Jordan bring us motive power, we shall take up soil in electric trucks to refertilise the arid heights of these mountains, which the Arabs have reduced to bare skeletons. Then forests of sweet gums of the West and the East will flourish here and little by little the land will win back its fertility, a fertility so great that it was held to be miraculous. . . . Would you like to see our poultry? There also we are experimenting. . . .”

And we marvel at an exemplary poultry-yard, where the most diverse fowls of Pharaoh, of Houdan, of China, of Sumatra, all wearing rings on their fingers; dressed in bulging odalisque trousers, wise, white virgins, and madcap blondes, dishevelled and ruffled up the wrong way, but nevertheless laying a fine egg every day. . . .

For a long time I had been drawn to a rapid-flowing blue streak, blotched with straw sunshine, behind the swaying trees; it was the Jordan. It had left the Lake of Tiberias a little higher up and now, *svelte*, rejuvenated, drunk with its freedom, it ran under supple trees whose branches caress and cradle it and brush it with their aromatic twigs.

A little peninsula runs out at the end of the estate. Rushes and papyrus are enveloped by a cloud of dazzling dragon-flies. . . . Above in the trees doves coo: little light-coloured tortoises swim in the water: fish-catching swallows dart their steel-blue barbs from one side to the other, and the limpid, murmuring Jordan—O Jordan, sacred stream!—wets our toes.

Bethany—“The Gardens!” Perhaps in this idyllic peninsula Jesus baptised his first flock of children of God.

He and his good Galileans disembarked from their

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boat over there at Taricheæ: they walked through the high grasses, in the shade of willows and poplars, discussing the kingdom of God, of which this countryside was the image, and in which their simple hearts were contented.

When the heat became excessive they took to the water. The dragon-flies wove iridescent veils: the turtle-doves cooed in the foliage . . . a swooning dove beat its wings above their heads. . . . And in the evening they returned, their souls full of the spirit of God, and of smiling Nature. . . .

On the other side of the Jordan is Dagania, "The Cornflower," a Communist colony founded twelve years ago. Its fame will endure through the life and death there of Gordon, an old apostle of Zionism, and a great National writer, whose "Letters of a Workman in Palestine" can compare, in their fire and their profundity, with St. Paul's epistles.

An accountant in a great commercial establishment, Gordon, past his fiftieth year, of a sudden left his job and his family to journey to Palestine and labour the soil. As a workman he laboured in several colonies, preaching, when his work was finished, the gospel of Labour, the alliance between the life of Nature and the Hebrew speech, which alone could redeem the House of Jacob.

" 'When our ancient speech shall live again in our ancient land, then, indeed, our ancient nation will live again.' "

He said again: "The symbol of our difficulties is Hebrew; we have overcome that difficulty: now we are sure to vanquish every other."

In his last years he came to settle in Dagania,

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attracted equally by the biblical countryside and equable climate and the little group of Lithuanian workers who shared his ideas.

Six weeks ago, aged sixty-four years, he had died, at work with his pick up to the last moment and leaving as his last will and testament: "Love one another, and work. The joy of work in common is an indissoluble link." On the shore of Jordan, under the eucalyptus, his tomb is still without its stone, and a sadness seemed to weigh on the charming little colony, where two-score colonists, men and women, single and married—simple, calm, peaceful, true "men of Galilee"—live in a delicate communism, in an evangelical unselfishness, sharing everything, possessing nothing, knowing that they will never possess anything, not even the land upon which they toil, spend themselves, and die!

" 'The earth is the Lord's,' " a young Lithuanian colonist with a sweet smile and inspired eyes, an intimate comrade of Gordon, tells us in the great room on the first floor which does duty as library: "See Moses!" and, opening the Book, he translates:

" 'And the land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine: for ye are strangers and sojourners with me.' "

And putting the Book back into its case:

"The land was formerly God's: to-day it belongs to the Jewish nation: our colony was bought by the Jewish National Fund."

"But what of your children?"

"They will labour like ourselves, better than ourselves, since we have made ready the soil, and they have been born here. 'The land shall be their betrothed, the animals shall be their friends,' as the prophet proclaims. They will know themselves to be on

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Jewish soil, that they can dare to be simply and frankly Jews. What more is needed? . . . Obviously, he who desires to amass treasure should not come to Erez-Israel. Here we amass a soul, we treasure up a national life. We had lost our soul in our many wanderings: or, rather, we had a wandering soul borrowed from our exile. In alien lands we had become so alien to ourselves that we no longer felt the alienation of our souls. Here alone we can perceive that it was not our real soul. But as soon as it can plunge its roots once more into the soil of the patriarchs, and nourish itself on the sun of Judæa, we rediscover the tang of our national life, and the desire for a country of our own, of which, abroad, we had forgotten the significance.

"And," I asked, "under what shape do you picture this new Judæa? What sort of Government do you want for your country?"

"We don't busy ourselves with politics. We are a band of workers. We only want to be left to work in peace. The rest will come. Our mode of life will develop itself in conformability to Nature. The land will dictate to us its laws. Maybe, too, the spirit of our forefathers will inspire. In principle, we don't want to borrow anything from Europe. . . ."

"It has often been said that you would find an easier, more pleasant homeland in other parts of the world: in the Argentine, in Uganda. . . ."

The "disciple" cuts me short.

"No! No!" he breaks in energetically, a spark of indignation in his eyes. "No, that would be treason to ourselves. Palestine alone can be the fatherland of the Jewish people. We have sunk in it such a huge capital. We have sunk in it two thousand years of

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grief ! That counts for something. We must now realise the investment. Certainly we have not finished our sufferings for Palestine, and we shall continue to feel our grief: but, at least, here our suffering, our grief, has some reason, whereas it has none anywhere else. In the War many of our people died, many killed their brothers without fault or interest or passion, and without hope; here, at least, if we die or make others die, we know it is for something. . . .”

While the disciple was speaking, men and women pioneers, their labour finished, had come to listen. Nearly all had fine, energetic heads, and eyes wherein burned an intense inner life. But the women seemed weary, tired out, and one of them, whom I knew to have a doctor's degree of Geneva, showed the callous hands of the peasant. . . .

Have they really forgotten their past ? And how, so different, necessarily, in origin, tastes, character, can forty people live in perfect community of heart and spirit throughout their monotonous days ? Are there no clashes, disagreement, jealousy, love, despair ?

“ Yes, truly,” replies the woman doctor, “ there are difficult moments and crises. . . . But that is such a small thing compared to our ideal . . . and if only you knew how manual labour in common smooths everything. . . . Besides, it is not for ourselves and the present that we work, it is for the future and the peace of those who are to come.”

And she gave such a tender smile that instinctively I thought of the sainted women of the Evangel, who lived without personal needs, awaiting the Messianic promise. . . .

The sun set behind Tiberias. We went out on to the balcony. Below is spread out the marvellous

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garden of Dagania, cut in two by a long, somewhat funereal cypress avenue, at the end of which the Jordan scintillates like a river of mother-of-pearl and opal.

Behind us, we know, stretches Transjordan, the lands of Gilead and Moab with their fat pastures and their nomad tribes, for all time brigands and marauders.

"Don't you dread such neighbours?"

"No, not now. At first we lost a good many men. The Beduins still come from time to time to steal fruit or drive off cattle, but they dare not attack us or our colony. They have learnt that the Jew is not always 'the man who is afraid.' They respect us now, as will Europe when she knows of our efforts. Maybe, even, the world will come to like us one day, when it realises how much of ourselves we have given it, without receiving anything in return. And then God's word will be accomplished: 'My house will be a house of prayer for all the nations.'"

We go down: below is a crèche, a kindergarten, a dormitory where fifteen joyous children are romping, supervised by two young women dressed as nurses. It is explained to me that they are told off to take entire charge of the little ones, these two mothers working for the whole community.

Half a dozen urchins throw themselves on the disciple, seizing his arms and legs.

"You are a very young father," I said.

"I am a bachelor," he replies with a beatific smile; "but all these children are a little bit mine, for I work for them, and they are the hope of the Jewish nation. . . . Look at this little girl. She is called Dagania: are not her eyes cornflowers, and her hair as fair as the wheat that grows by Jordan?"

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As we leave we pass the refectory: the labourers are gathered round hunks of bread and bowls of milk. Their tired bodies have such serenity that we are reminded of the first Christian disciples, of whom it is said: "And they . . . did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart."

And what shall I say of thee, colony of Kinnereth, the "Lyre," so calmly placed, so bourgeois above thy murmuring sea, while the dramas and idylls of life have passed over thee?

Oh! thy little, steep cemetery, overhanging the waves, where sleep, reunited in death, three lovers who lacked the cowardice to live: Shoushanna, the fair "Wild Rose," between a Werther of nineteen and her betrothed, a musician colonist, who was found one morning on the shores of the lake, his life and his violin broken, no more accompanying with melody the murmurs of Kinnereth.

And other youthful tombs: Uriel, who, too, died voluntarily for his spiritual lover, Zion the chimæra; Hannan, taken at seventeen by fever—her portrait remains to show us how charming she was—David Icar (peasant), aged twenty-two, assassinated by a Beduin bullet as he followed his peaceful plough; two comrades, Reuben and Ephraim, whom the Jordan drowned one day they went bathing. . . .

There, in brief, is the history of nearly all the colonies of Erez-Israel, which devours its passionate youth.

Weep, O Kinnereth! Sing, O lyre! Cradle thy children, Sea of Galilee! . . .

Above the little, steep cemetery on a kind of promontory is a barbaric, pointed monument: a pyramid

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in rough, black stone—a memorial *Galed*, such as Jacob built to witness his alliance with Laban, and the Lord ordered the twelve tribes to erect in memory of their entry into the land of Canaan.

This one is the Galed of Herzl, raised on the day of the death of the second Moses, who brought back the remnant of the Chosen People toward the Promised Land. . . .

No carving, no inscription on this mass of basalt rock. Everyone knows it is the Galed of Herzl: the children of Israel will tell one another from generation to generation. . . .

But behind the funereal pyramid, dominating the steep little cemetery, is a whole forest of cypresses planted, also, as a memorial: a whole forest of “trees of life” triumphing over death lower down. . . .

O little cemetery of Kinnereth, shall I ever forget thy poetic symbol?

CHAPTER IX

MAGDALA

ANOTHER fine Chalutz road, again along the shores of the lake: but this time in the other direction, going north to the biblical Naphtali, to Upper Galilee.

Everywhere on the hills along the road are ruins, masses of squared blocks proving that once the villas of Tiberias spread out here, where now all is stony waste and death.

Below, the little bays continue with their little capes where the water breaks past clear and burbling, foam-flecked like a real sea, without the slightest trace of mud. . . . Now and again we see a century-old tree: wilder rose-laurels, more tangled papyrus: it is the site of some town, maybe Bethsaida, maybe Chorazim. . . .

We stop at a vividly green creek. The ruins of a chapel, the vestiges of an aqueduct, palms growing again from stumps, and, in the middle of a charming tangle of lianas, a huge circular basin, whence gush warm springs. Before the War, it appears, it was a place of pilgrimage much frequented by Russian pilgrims, by those thousands of Batouska and Matouska who overran Palestine on foot, and camped in this garden, formerly shaded, which belonged to the Grand Duke Serge: the Beduins have sacked everything, and, with morbid voluptuousness, bathed in the waters where, according to the Russian legend, Mary of the nearby town of Magdala came, with a view to the future, to bathe her sinful body. . . .

Magdala itself, a miserable hamlet of a few houses, has escaped the oblivion and disappearance that, in such stupefying fashion, has overtaken the other sites

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of the Evangel. Its position is known with exactitude, and to-day, in fact, Migdal flourishes: Migdal the Jewish colony has expanded under a tropical vegetation: bananas and palms, gardens of oranges and lemons, surrounded by giant bamboos.

Pretty tamed Beduin women are working there, and greet us with a welcoming "Shalôm!" accompanied by a rattle of sequins.

"They are Pekiines, Arab Jews," explains the complaisant Magdala colonist, whose wiry, steel body and tanned face almost disappear between high riding-boots and a pith helmet.

"Yes, it is a very curious case. These women belong to a small tribe that inhabits the village of Pekiine, in Upper Galilee, whence it takes its name. These Pekiines are the only autochthonous Jews of Palestine, the only ones who were never dispersed: the only ones who maintained themselves in the midst of pagan, Christian, Mussulman, Crusading invasions, clinging to Judaism as their village clings to the mountain. Probably they were of the number of those worthy Galilean peasants who were mocked at in Jerusalem for their simple manners and rough dialect. Your Jesus and his disciples did not much differ from them. It is said that they became completely assimilated to the Arabs, from whom, in fact, you could not distinguish them by their looks: but I think, rather, that they have remained just as they were at the destruction of the Temple. Hidden in their mountain, they have simply carried on their pastoral and agricultural life—both men and women are excellent fellahs, whom I employ in large numbers—and they suffice to demonstrate that the Jew is perfectly capable of being a good peasant, devoted to his land."

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“ What language do these Pekiines speak ? ”

“ Arabic, because, in the course of centuries and with no other Jews near, their Hebrew became transformed. But their ritual language is still Hebrew, a Hebrew of two thousand years ago, much mixed with Armenian and Syriac.”

In front of us a young, pretty Pekiine woman is digging a trench round an orange-tree. Her supple pose is full of humility at the foot of this tree, albeit she is bedizened like a Queen of Love: a necklace of amber, great silver plaques on her forehead, rings on her ankles and wrists: and I seem to behold Miriam, the passionate repentant, pouring out at the foot of Jesus the perfumes destined for her body. . . .

Warm springs and icy fountains gush indifferently from the volcanic soil, and run away toward the lake.

“ Ah, you can't imagine the trouble these springs have given—and still give—me ! Formerly they were lost in the soil and stagnated in this plain, which was nothing but a mortal swamp. We have had to drain the land, discipline the brooks, plant this eucalyptus wood along the shore. But you wouldn't believe the rebellious, destructive character of these streams ! One would think them Beduins. I have to fight them continually. You can see my trees: well, as soon as I stop away from here for a little time, my brook leaves its bed and, instead of running into the lake, comes here on to the beach to burrow away the sand round the roots to undermine my eucalyptus and carry it away to the sea. Like the Arab, it is a hereditary enemy of trees.

“ With Beduins and Arabs one can easily understand how this region, so famous for its woods, has become

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deforested. And, naturally, the desert has caused an increase in the temperature. For in the days of the Talmud the climate of the shores of Kinnereth was moderate. And you notice, too, that here at Migdal it is much fresher than at Tiberias, where vegetation has completely disappeared. And if only you could have seen the forests of the colony before the War! Turks and Germans, naturally, cut down and destroyed everything. Happily, things grow quickly here: in two years I can have a tree, and in this admirable soil I can plant at any time of the year. . . . But let us go up to the colony. From up there you will be able to appreciate the formation and fertility of the country much better."

We climb the hill by a road bordered by hedges of mimosa in flower, whose heavy scent, mingled with the delicate aroma of the orange-trees, goes pleasantly to the head. . . .

On the way we met more indigenous workmen, who greet us with the Hebrew "Shalôm!"

"Pekiines, aren't they?"

"No, Arabs. I employ both, each in their own special line."

"You live on good terms with the Arabs?"

"On the best terms in the world. They profit by our material accessories, and we profit by their experience. If they fall ill, or are bitten by snakes, they come to us for treatment, for, naturally, we have a pharmacy and a nurse. Many of them already speak Hebrew. Why would you not have them friendly with us? They know that they have everything to gain from the Jews, and that we shall never compete with them. A Jew could not accept the wages of an Arab. We have more needs than he. We shall

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always be the consumers of the country, and the importers, which will benefit him. Only, they are a little shocked to see us working, we whom they look on as masters, instead of remaining inactive, 'seated' as they say, in the manner of the *Effendis*. 'Ouallah ! one of my labourers often repeats to me ; ' Ouallah ! thou art a Kharvajah who goest on horseback, and thou diggest the earth, thou plantest trees : thou dirtiest thy hands ! By God, my Kharvajah ! that's not right. . . . '

The colony is a great quadrilateral, resembling any modern farm. It has nothing Oriental, except a few Arabs or Pekiines.

In the courtyard, and above the porch, a weather-cock of Hebrew letters turning at the sport of the winds. It is the name, Migdal, and the date of its foundation, 5670 (1910). And it is still surprising, still a little shocking, to see, associated with the most mundane affairs, these solemn signs which traced the Decalogue on Tables of Mount Sinai.

Here, a dozen colonists and their families exploited the vast domain, bought by Russian "friends of Zion." But the War having ruined the former capitalists, the colonists now work, individually, each for himself, and the son of one of the proprietors, having escaped from the Bolsheviks, has no other resource but to work as a labourer the land given to strangers by his father. He is a charming, big fellow, dressed, to-day, in the *rubascka* of the mujik : from his one-time opulence he has preserved only well-bred manners, a remarkable gift for dancing, and a platinum ring on his finger.

And she, too, is charming, the wife of our friendly colonist, who, assisted by the "dancer," receives us on

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a terrace half overgrown by passiflores and climbing jasmine.

Still quite young, with something very pure and virginal, she nevertheless holds in her arms her fourth baby. A pretty little girl clings to her chair, and two bright boys, with a very wide-awake look, skim, without bothering about us, an illustrated fairy-story book, where Tom Thumb and Puss in Boots have become Hebrew personages.

Behind we see into an open room, with a samovar on the table, a library, and a complete set of childish furniture in white enamel.

Everything, mother and children, witnesses to an order and cleanliness that one scarcely finds on our farms, and I ask myself why we are pleased to give Jewish families a reputation for dirtiness.

"My wife," says the man of Magdala maliciously, "is an ex-Chalutzoth: she came to Palestine to break stones on the Kwish, and I don't know whether, at bottom, she doesn't regret having married me too quickly."

"But I did work at Merhavia, all the same," she retorts, fondling the child on her lap.

"Yes, but not for long! . . . You know 'the Spaces of the Lord,' I think. It is there that I met her eight years ago. She was so slim, so spiritual: she came from Russia. Her parents lived in a village in the Moscow district. My wife, like many another girl, wanted to study to be a dentist, at the University. But Jewesses were forbidden to live in Moscow, except they followed the profession of prostitutes. Only prostitutes were given permission to stay. Many Jewesses therefore had themselves put on the police register and managed, thanks to their authorisation,

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to attend their courses. My wife employed the same subterfuge. But the police were suspicious. They sent clients to the girl students ! On their refusal to receive them, they were expelled : then my wife and a group of dentist students, unable to follow a scientific career, enrolled themselves in the Army of Labour for Erez-Israel. . . . Now you understand why, in whatsoever hard toil, we are happy here ?”

And taking his little daughter in his arms :

“ O Hanneleh, Hanneleh, thou at least wilt not know the shame of being a Jewess, thou wilt not know the infamies of the *galuth*. . . .”

I went to the edge of the terrace. At my feet unrolled the great cultivated spaces, like a fine cloth of green satin wherein, here and there, an Arab field represents a horrid, rough portion. Then, like velvet tapestry, come tropical plantations, bordered by the black plush of the cypresses and, behind the mauve lace-work of the trembling eucalyptus, the blue mirror of the lake, reflecting the mountains of Gaulanitis, which to-day are the frontier of Syria.

To the west of Magdala rises a high, rocky chain whose hills, full of grottoes, have deep chambers, subterranean galleries, a whole labyrinthine fortress where the Maccabees resisted the army of Antiochus Epiphanes, where Herod had to combat entrenched rebels, where for centuries brigands and outlaws dwelt, where in the late War deserters fled in such numbers that Liman von Sanders said : “ Of a hundred thousand men of the Turkish army there are sixty thousand who desert and forty thousand who go after them. . . .”

At the foot of these mountains, spreading to the horizon, is the plain of Gennesaret, whose fertility was

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so proverbial that the Talmud located in it the Terrestrial Paradise.

“ From here,” says our colonist, “ the first-fruits went to the Temple, and doubtless it was these same Pekiine women who took the baskets of offerings on their heads. And the fruit arrived in such abundance at Jerusalem for the feasts of Easter and Pentecost that the *Choenim* forbade its entry into the Temple, lest it should be said that the faithful went up to Jerusalem to taste the fruits of Genesar. To-day the greater part of this plain is uncultivated: look at the fields where paths are thicker than wheat ! The Jewish National Fund is negotiating for its purchase. But that may take years. It is impossible to imagine the difficulty of buying a bit of land ! Firstly, one never knows the real owner, and when one at last discovers his name he doesn’t know exactly what land is his. For with the Arabs the same field does not belong for two consecutive years to the same fellah. One might say that they practise rotation of proprietors, as we practise rotation of crops. It is a practice inspired by a spirit of justice, so that poor or rich soil may not always be in the same hands: but it results in discouragement to work. What is the good of cultivating my land, if next year my successor leaves it fallow ? And in this practice, I think, is to be found one of the causes of the extraordinary abandonment of this countryside. Look here at the lands of our colony ! As fertile as biblical Gennesaret. In particular we grow early peas, French beans, tomatoes, that we dispose of in the markets of Beirut and Damascus. But our first-fruits we send to Jerusalem: and having no longer either priests or Temple, we offer them to our Zionist delegates.”

CHAPTER X

ROSH-PINAH

WE climb up steadily on one of the oldest and most frequented roads in the world. It is by this road that Abraham, driving before him his Chaldæan flocks, descended into Canaan: that Joseph, sold by his brothers, followed the Midianites: by this road went Solomon's caravans with their bells, uniting Jerusalem to Tadmor, "the Desert": here also with chariots and cavalry swooped down all the terrible invaders, from Tilgath-Pilneser and Nebuchadnezzar to Chosroes and Selim the Fierce.

To-day we met only an English armoured car, taking Hindu soldiers to the camp at Rosh-Pinah, and a yet more unexpected apparition, a band of little girls who, a blue veil round their caps, a haversack on their backs, and an alpenstock in their hands, were led by two young teachers, dressed like Alpinists.

"It is a girls' school on tour," explains my guide "It is a custom here. Each spring the schools make an agricultural and historical pilgrimage through part of Palestine."

We climb continually, through fields of grasses, through tapestries of flowers, where red flax, ivory scabious, and yellow crucifers weave the most delicate arabesques, while blue sages spread out into lakes of perfume.

At every moment larks sing to heaven their fleeting ecstasy, while along the roadside solemn storks look like Parisians on their Sunday promenade.

Very high, in front of us, is a white point: Safed, a holy city, the throne of the future Messiah who, according to a Talmudic prediction, will be born at

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Tiberias, and will assemble this dispersed people, mounted on a white she-ass, before coming to sit here. Behind us, tiny, and in its depth like a sapphire at the bottom of a goblet, the Sea of Kinnereth: and in the East, another mirror wherein gleam sombre reflections, Huleh, the ancient Lake Merom, also fed by the Jordan, which, unaided, fills three lakes.

And now we are at Rosh-Pinah, or rather at its foot, for the colony is spread out, opposite the English camp, on the slope of a hill which neither our automobile nor our legs feel the courage to climb in the midday sun.

Well, we must stay where we are, then, in front of this convoy of vehicles, in this hostelry shaded by pines and eucalyptus which reminds us of a hostelry in the Landes.

It is clean, fresh, with its chalk-whitened room, and its middle table covered by an irreproachable cloth and porcelain plates. . . .

A Chalutz in one corner is eating pickled cucumber, in another a sheikh in a white turban and caftan sips a tiny cup of coffee.

"Shalôm! Shalôm!" we are welcomed by a gushing Polish Jewess, our hostess. "Hen! hen! Some beer! Wine from Carmel, a roast goose if you want to lunch . . . tov! tov!"

And while a young girl, with Gretchen plaits down her back, lays the table, I look at a lamp on the side-board, composed of eight little lamps in a line before a plaque ornamented with lions of Judah, and flanked on the left and high up by a ninth little lamp. My guide explains:

"It is the *Hanukkah*, the candelabra that is lit once a year, on the Feast of Lights, in commemoration of our

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delivery from the Syrian yoke, and of the restoration of our cult after an interval of eight years."

"But," I asked, returning to the *Hanukkah* on the sideboard, "what is the ninth little lamp for?"

"It is the *shamas*, the sacristan, the servant; it is used to light the other lamps. Ah! if only you knew the Russian towns. Every child has his *Hanukkah*, of white metal, and in the evening he stands it at the window-pane, to illuminate the sombre alleys of the Ghetto. I have often thought that there is a resemblance between our Feast of Lights and your Christmas, which falls at the same time. And I have asked myself whether your Christmas tree, that northern fir that has no connection with the Bethlehem of Judæa, may not have had its root in some Russian Ghetto. . . ."

As we were discussing this, there came in two nuns, one very old and evidently French, the other quite young and, doubtless, Palestinian, to judge by her colouring and her accent. They had come in from Safed, riding astride on donkeys. It is a hard ride, downhill on a stony path. One used to go by carriage, but the road has been closed for repairs. . . . The aged nun in particular is quite worn out. And now they have to go on further, to Tiberias, fortunately in a carriage, and from there rejoin their mother-house at Nazareth. . . .

They had scarcely sat down at our table to refresh themselves when a Chalutz entered accompanied by a Chalutzoth with shepherdess' hair. They sit on a canopy and talk in Hebrew with the first comrade.

The nuns lowered their eyes to their crucifixes:

"You are astonished, Reverend Mother, to hear Hebrew spoken, and to see these new immigrants?"

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The old lady is too tired to reply, but her young Sister says:

“What would you? It is their Holy Land, too. When one lives in a country one must be friendly with everyone.”

The Sephardi coachman—one would take him for an Arab—announces that his carriage is ready. Everyone hastens out, including the white-turbaned Sheikh. Outside he rejoins two women with black kerchiefs, who had been secreted heaven knows where. One of them, with a child in her arms, sobs under her veil. She groans, prays, and embraces the other, who also is weeping, and climbs, helped by the Sheikh, into the high charabanc, where an old Jew with caftan and fur bonnet is already seated. The Kerchief who is staying behind holds out the child to the departing Kerchief, and I gather from their talk that the former is going to America with her baby to rejoin her husband. The other, the mother, will go up again to Safed in the evening, on her ass, following at a distance her handsome husband, the white-turbaned Sheikh, who has come down to bless his daughter before her departure. What, O Lord, will this black sphinx of Safed do in the New World, in the States?

We helped the nuns to seat themselves on the second seat: the Chalutz and his companion jump on next to the driver, and the bus moves off, taking a whole world of religions and races to unknown destinations. . . .

Rosh-Pinah, “the Corner-Stone,” is, with Sedjerah, one of the first colonies founded by Baron Edmond de Rothschild, to garner in the persecuted Jews of Russia.

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Extending picturesque on its hill, it is like a Basque village, with its little houses of stone blocks, and its surrounding evergreen cypresses and ever-moving eucalyptus, the tree that is akin to both willow and poplar, and, at the first touch of the sun, exhales its healthful aroma.

And how pretty is the massive Manor, right at the top of the hill, with a great terrace in front of it, and overlooking a sloping garden full of these trees with trembling fleeces, crossed and recrossed by streams, gay with laughing waterfalls !

On this terrace we let the heat of the day pass by. Tea is served impeccably by a little Chalutzoth, spritely and with shining eyes and a melancholy smile. She is the only daughter of a family in comfortable circumstances in Galicia, and has attended the High School.

“ Were you, too, persecuted ? ”

“ No, no ! we were very prosperous in Galicia.”

“ Then why did you come ? ”

She shrugs her shoulders.

“ We were all a set of girls and young men: it used to be said: ‘ We must prepare the roads of Erez-Israel for the future generation.’ So one day we all fled—our parents wouldn’t give us leave to go—and we did the journey on foot, travelling from town to town, begging our bread, sleeping in barns, finally held up in Trieste because we were not allowed to embark. At last, at last, after three months—it would take too long to tell you all we suffered—we saw Jaffa appear on the horizon, we set foot on the soil of Judæa ! I thought I would die of joy ! ”

“ And then ? ”

“ And then it was not so fine. We had pictured things quite otherwise. Well, since we had come to

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work . . . I was sent to near Beersheba, in the desert. I broke stones. It was hard in the sun and the dust, and I kept bruising my fingers . . . my hands were quite deformed"—she had very pretty hands—"but I met a husband there. We went away together to work in another part. I fell ill. I was nursed in the hospital at Safed, then sent here to convalesce."

"You ought to be enchanted, this lovely garden, this beautiful terrace. . . ."

"No," she answers vigorously, "it was not, after all, to wait upon 'aristocrats' that we came to Erez-Israel! I would like to be back on the Kwish."

In the evening we went up to the Arab village, which keeps its ancient name: Djuannin, the Starving: and is huddled below a clear spring which runs into a drinking pool.

Seated on the rocks we watch the flocks return in the peace of the evening from the low pastures, from the inundated plains of the Jordan, and the lagoons of Merom. Flocks and flocks, fat cows, nearly all black, little comic calves, jumping sideways after their own tails. I can't recall having seen a similar bovine procession since leaving France.

"All that Jewish cattle?"

"No, half and more belongs to 'The Starving.' You are astonished? . . . The name of the village alone, evidently, indicates its poverty, its one-time poverty: but forty years ago the Jews came here. Then the Arab prospered. Here each fellah has lands that he cultivates according to our methods, herds that he drives to pasture with ours, and, at the least, the emblem of luxury, three mares and three wives. His house has remained as it was, and his needs, too. He buries his gold, and digs it up only to buy a new

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wife—and they have gone up in price very considerably, like everything else, since the War—and the older he is, the more his prestige necessitates that he should choose a young girl.”

Behind the herd walk two men of extraordinarily huge proportions, carrying their labourers' implements on their shoulders. Both are dressed in Muscovite fashion, boots, jerkin, black cap. One is an old man, with a flowing beard, the other adolescent. The old man recalls in every detail the Slav pilgrims whom I have heard singing the despairing *gospodi* and seen, their foreheads bound with a crown of thorns, dragging themselves on their knees at sacred shrines.

They greet us politely with a sonorous, deep “Shalôm,” then turn off by a side street below the pool.

“Who are they?”

“Debrorim and his son; they are *gerim*, proselytes to Judaism, like the aged Sarah whom you saw at Sedjara. The father is an old character! He too belonged to the Sabbatist sect, and he, too, became a Jew at the time of the terrible persecutions, out of pity for the Jews and, perhaps, out of that instinctive thirst for martyrdom that torments the Slav soul. . . . He knows no word of Hebrew, but there is no one more fanatical than he; he says his Sabbatist sect is a very old Jewish tribe, converted forcibly to Christianity, for he insists absolutely on belonging to our Semitic race: though when he quarrels with a colonist, all this doesn't prevent him from abusing him as a ‘dirty Jew.’”

We found him again on a seat in front of his house, his prayer-book in his hand. He tells us his story, with the help of an interpreter, a little Arabic, and

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gestures above all, true Slav gestures, vast, categoric, expressed by square, powerful peasant hands, without taking from us his frank and mystical blue eyes.

He was called Cyril Alexander, he was born at Tsaritsin in Little Russia. He was twenty when they burnt the Jewish houses, threw their women into wells, and squashed the children under their boots or against corners of the walls. "Why do you that?" he asked the Cossacks. "Because they read this Book." And he too wishes to read this Book. He procures one, in Russian. "It is Truth," he cries, and he preaches it about him. The whole village is converted to Judaism. They are thrown into prison. They are enchanted. They are set at liberty. They sell their goods and come to Palestine—oh, not through fear of humiliation—but because, being Jews, they wish to live on the soil of the Hebrews.

"And yet the soil here is worthless. The soil of Russia is far better: always plains without a single stone. Here are mountains and stones everywhere!" But he is happy because, however bad the soil, it is Erez-Israel.

"Isn't it also the land where Christos was born?"

He opens his eyes very widely.

"Christos? Njet! Njet! Christos finished! Christos not good; he, three Allah"—he holds up three massive fingers separated the one from the other—"Jahoudi, a single Allah. Allah is one!" And his index finger calling heaven to witness, this Russian convert to Judaism seems to be reciting the Mussulman *Schedadah*.

Then he adds:

"I say my three prayers daily, *shabarit*, *minha*, and *arabi*; I am *mizrachi*."

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"But since you know no Hebrew?"

He takes his *siddur*, in two languages; putting his hand over the Russian side:

"I read here."

Then, showing the Hebrew text:

"Adonai reads over my shoulder."

Oh, the fresh dawn in the old Manor, where in each room shines a great earthenware stove, and on every bed is a bulging purple velvet eiderdown. It was the house of the Administrator, the nice Chalutzoth told me as we took our tea on the terrace, the house of Monsieur K., a veritable Polish nobleman; the same, indeed, who had come to Damascus to suggest to me this tour of the colonies. Yes, I knew him. Intelligent, supple-minded, chivalrous, and combining with practical ability a taking idealism and a remarkable power of conciliation, he made himself beloved by men of every race, and in the War managed to protect the colonies from Djemal Pasha's worst rigours. Now, appointed a Councillor of the British Government, Monsieur K. is one of the most characteristic and popular figures of Jewish colonisation and present-day Zionism.

The house he built and lived in is now administrative offices, but it has kept the signs of his tenancy, and I recline on the verandah admiring the ravishing spread of garden, where the pride of the cypress contrasts and harmonises with the suppleness of the weeping-pepper, which comes over the balustrade to caress my cheek with its perfumed feathers.

To the right, so close that one is frightened, an absolutely arid mountain reminds one that one is in Palestine. It is the mountain that hides from us

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holy Safed, and as we scrutinise it minutely we can make out, half-way up, blinding white slabs of stone, which shine through a hedge of funereal yews: it is the cemetery of the colony, that has grown, climbing the slope, to be nearer the throne of the Messiah. . . .

We are taken to see the school. Truly it is a magnificent school, much finer than a mere village school: great, airy rooms, a chemical laboratory, superb equipment, many teachers.

The teaching is entirely in Hebrew, but the methods are the most modern. Learning by practical work is the basis of everything: in the Junior classes the children model clay, in the Senior, they tell their impressions by drawing. Everywhere maps, collections of plants, of insects, tableaux of object-lessons. One could not find in France any elementary school equally well equipped.

Since we could not understand the courses, the amiable Director took us to a music lesson. The teacher, a young Russian, dressed in the black *rubascka*, had a good-looking sad face, which smiled only when his violin sang.

They begin by the Sabbath inauguration, previously heard at Tiberias:

Come to thy well-beloved. . . .

Possibly the canticle modulated by the famous Viennese cantor was of finer technique, but nothing can render the charm and freshness of the voices of these children who await with pious ardour the coming of the

“Serene Princess, with crownèd head.”

The hymn is divided into parts; the boys take the bass, the girls the alto, and the solo of the impatient

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bridegroom, the people of Israel, is sung by a mite with flaxen hair and snub nose and Tartar cheek-bones; but she has such clear eyes and such a pure voice that one would think her a Kalmuck virgin.

"She is the grand-daughter of Debrorin," whispers my Zionist. "She is called Rebekka, but she is a true Slav musician. . . ."

And now the girls sing a round-game of the fields, a national heritage so old that the words have been lost, and only the notes remain, while the rhythm is emphasised by snapping together finger and thumb and clapping hands. It is surely one of the rustic dances danced on the threshing-floors and around the grape-presses by the Hebrew virgins at the Feast of the First-Fruits.

And how happy, how assured these young people seem! Ah, they have not known, they will not know, the horrors of the Ghetto.

And I thought of that noble figure, that great philanthropist, to whom thousands of Jewish children owe their happiness: to whom I myself have owed more than one happiness. I am not acquainted with him, and his portrait is nowhere to be found. I am told he had always refused to publish abroad his likeness. For many years no one knew his name. The children each evening prayed for "the Benefactor," and only lately, when one of his sons came to Palestine, they found that they ask for Adonai's benediction upon the house of Rothschild. . . .

Above Rosh-Pinah is another school, small and humble. It was founded by Monsieur K. for the children of "The Starving." They learn Arabic with a Mussulman *Koulab* and Hebrew with a teacher from the village.

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I arrived during a translation, and I was able to follow very well the Arab rendering of a Hebrew fable where, as in a Hans Andersen story, an inkpot, a ruler, and a penholder dispute, and all end up by being imprisoned in a schoolboy's satchel.

"These little fellahs pronounce Hebrew much better than we," the Jewish teacher tells me. "It is through the Arabs that we shall find again the authentic pronunciation of our language, distorted by exile."

"Who is he?" I asked, struck by the prettiness and clean garments of a little boy.

"He is a young husband."

"A young husband?"

"Yes, he is twelve years old. His parents have no daughters to do the hard work, to draw water, make cheese, bake the bread. So they have married their son in order to get hold of a servant. His wife is sixteen. But he got bored at home and has come back to school after the first week of his honeymoon. . . ."

More colonies, still more colonies in this Upper Galilee, around the "Waters of Merom," colonies all founded by the modest and munificent Benefactor, who has striven to create a new hearth and home for his co-religionists, everywhere else persecuted, humiliated, outcast.

But how black, how lugubrious this lake! Does it keep the memory of the great assembly of kings on its banks? King of Hazor, King of Madon, King of Shimron, King Achshaph, King of Chinneroth, reigning over the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, who came with the hosts of their chariots and horsemen, with their armies as countless as the

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sands of the sea, to camp beside the waters of Merom, to "fight against Israel."

Yes, does it keep the memory of those barbarian hosts and their fierce cries, that it is so sombre, so taciturn: while around it stretch Machnayim, Mishmar Hajarden, Jessod Hamaala, colonies of equally biblical name, but nowadays the home of a peaceful agricultural population. At Mishmar Hajarden—the Gate of Jordan—we discover the camp of the girl-scouts whom we passed on the way. They are asking to have explained to them—these little Hierosolymites—what fodder is to be given to cows, how Dutch cheese is made, at what temperature incubators must be kept. . . . Caps on heads, haversacks on backs, naturalists' collecting-box at their side, alpenstock in hand, here indeed are future colonists who will not be "tender-foots."

For ten days they have been travelling, under the supervision of their teachers: sleeping in schools, eating with the inhabitants, washing their linen in the springs, and in the evening, by the light of electric pocket-lamps, writing up their "impression de voyage." The boys do the same, but sleep beneath the stars and cook their own food. And when one tells oneself that these are Jewish children, then indeed one perceives that certain things are changed in Israel.

On horseback to Safed by a very stony path, across arid mountains, under a devouring sky.

Behind me, on a fine mare, rides the son of a Rosh-Pinah colonist, himself an agriculturist, who tries to enlist my sympathy for his grievances—those of a whole group, "the Beni-Benjamin," who, like himself, were born in Palestine of

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parents who settled in the colonies more than thirty years ago.

They are hurt and injured by the coming of the Chalutzim, who, according to them, are offered every facility, spoilt, fêted, and given lands which they are incapable of cultivating since they have no experience.

“ But they have their idealism ? ”

“ Yes, but they have no religion. ”

“ What matter, since they have Faith ! ”

And the young man remains silent, disappointed, and I perceive that there is an antagonism of interests between these sons of Judæa and the new-comers. But the heat grows too overwhelming for controversy, and we are delighted when Safed the White appears, standing, like Rome, on seven hills. Four of them belonged to Jews, whom the War decimated. Thousands died of starvation, like the besieged Lebanites in their mountains, and the Mussulman population took possession again of the deserted hills.

Still, the surviving quarter is picturesque, with houses on different levels and tortuous alleys, squares covered with vines, and its inhabitants Jews from Spain, Babylonia, Persia, Kurdistan, who, in the sixteenth century, returned to the “ Throne of the Messiah ” whence Judaism had been banished since the Crusades and the days of the County of Tiberias.

A few old synagogues of the same epoch, one of them containing a tomb—an unique accident, as the neighbourhood of death is an impurity—and another a very sacred Thora of the fourteenth century from Spain in its Tabernacle, which, unfortunately, we are not allowed to examine without first plunging into the *mikwah*, the ritual bath of purification.

Safed was also a great Talmudic school, a centre of

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Judaic and above all Kabbalistic lore. It is even probable that the celebrated *Midrash Ha Zohar*, the "Book of Splendour," the Bible of the Kabala, attributed to Simeon-ben-Yohai, was edited at Safed by a Spanish rabbi of the sixteenth century. This Simeon-ben-Yohai, one of the most illustrious doctors who flourished *circa* 160 A.D., went to Rome, cured the Emperor's daughter, obtained permission to open an academy, retired, persecuted, into a grotto, and lived there for thirty years in the midst of his disciples, fed by a miraculous fig-tree, and informed of what was happening outside by means of arrows that children, as if in play, shot into his cave.

He reposes in the place where he taught at Meron in the desert of Upper Galilee. His tomb, as also that of his son Eliezer and of his disciples, is covered by a spacious mausoleum whither, every year, on the day of his death, on the Feast of *Lag Be 'Omer*, crowds of Jewish pilgrims come, and with them Druses and Mussulmans, too.

And while frantic dancers wheel round him who lies "buried in the splendour of the Sun," above, on the roof, two bonfires are lighted into which women throw their jewels and precious stuffs. All night long, down below, they dance and leap in honour of Simeon-ben-Yohai, and above, on the sacrificial altars, oil is poured, and garments thrown, whose flame goes to communicate with the souls of the dead through the spheres of light.

On the next day, in the hall lined with "Books of Splendour," the aged Hierophant cuts the hair of little children, of "nazir" vowed to Simeon-ben-Yohai, while the male parents recommence their saraband, and the mothers make their throats vibrate, as they

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shower sweetmeats and asperse the crowd with rose-water.

Then they go to pour oil on other sainted tombs, which are scattered all over this Galilean Thebaid: Rabbi Hillel, Rabbi Shammai, Rabbi Johanan Ha-Sandalar (the cobbler), and many other illustrious *tannaim* who sought refuge here after the fall of Jerusalem and the ruin of Jamnia. For it is in this Upper Galilee, accused of being a "Galilee of the Gentiles" and which the Pharisees accused of religious half-heartedness—it is in its savage mountains that Judaism took refuge, flowered again, and achieved such development in the third and fourth centuries that in the most wretched Arab villages one can find ruins of great and beautiful synagogues, built in Græco-Roman style, with porticoes garlanded with grapes and vine-leaves, identical with those of the temples and churches of Syria, and a proof of the unconscious attachment of the population to the old Dionysiac cult, in this land of vineyards and dancing.

It is in the neighbourhood of Meron that the village of Pekiine still stands, whose peasants I had already seen at work on the colonies, and who are the only Jews who at no epoch left the soil of their ancestors.

Before sunset we climbed to the highest point of holy Safed: the castle built by the Templars, and occupied by Kléber's army, but now dismantled.

We seated ourselves on the top of a ruined tower, and looked over the seven hills to the land of Canaan. The air is so transparent that everything is brought near. We can make out the line of the Mediterranean, Carmel jutting its wolf's mouth above the plain of Jezreel, Tabor round as an orange, Hermon solitarily

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white, and there, two steps away, under our feet, an azure medallion bordered by a golden circlet—the evangelic lake, the Sea of Galilee.

And, of a sudden, there is raised in the serene silence of the evening a grave, sweet song, tender and languorous.

It is our little vagabond friends, the school-children we met on the road, seated on the opposite tower, and singing in King David's tongue the song of the Babylonian captives:

When the Lord turned again the captivity of Sion,
We were like them that dream.

And it is infinitely poignant, it is deliciously sad, this milliennary canticle of hope, sung by these childish voices in the Crusaders' castle above the Messianic town. . . .

CHAPTER XI

IN SAMARIA

HAIFA once more. Mount Carmel once more: but this time we go round them to the south, by the railway which follows the Mediterranean, and borders Samaria.

Fat, cultivated lands, castles on the sea, forests of trees, little stations, charming sands, impressive ruins of the Castellum Peregrinum of the Templars; Tantura, the Phœnician colony whence came the purple dye, but where a modern glass-manufactory came to grief; Taradirus (Paradise), prosperous orange-groves, and at last Zichron-Jacob, "Commemoration of Jacob," a colony founded in memory of the father of Edmond de Rothschild, to whom all this flourishing countryside belongs.

A charabanc awaits us at the station, with a debonair driver like a good French peasant, but speaking Yiddish. And on the ascent, too, one could imagine oneself in some French mountain district, between oaks, aspens, acacias, alternating with eucalyptus hastily planted to replace the trees that have been cut down.

"War . . . Arabs . . ." says the driver, turning round.

Everywhere flowers, but not the same as in Galilee. It seems wiser, quieter in colour, this Samaritan flora: Alpine cyclamen, carnations, discreet spurge, ivory scabious, and, spread everywhere, like a dream flower or a cloud, a little slender, delicate plant, with umbels of such a pale rose, such a grey mauve, that they are like stone lace, or the divine foam that fell from Aphrodite when, born on the coast below, she

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went up to the "High Places" of Samaria, to make herself adored as Astarte.

And I amuse myself by imagining that we might discover, up there, the altar of the goddess and her voluptuous cult, to which the beautiful Jezebel brought sacrifices.

Alas, no ! On the high plateau an entirely modern village wakens me from my dreams.

A village or a town ? The streets are as broad as royal avenues, the public garden has a look of a health-resort promenade ; yes, it is a Spa that Zichron-Jacob resembles, with its houses more like chalets than the homes of agriculturists.

The driver stops before a cottage buried in wistaria.
" *Hier sollen Sie. . .* "

And he cracks his whip.

And at once there appear a most friendly couple, a doctor and his wife, who receive us as if we were old friends in France.

Inside, too, everything is French : the language, the comfortable furniture, this polished and bevelled buffet, where shines the massive silver of an old bourgeois family.

At lunch, served as in France, the son of the house comes in, a tall young man, thin and elegant, wearing spats, with diplomas of Grignon and Montpellier.

He takes us to the famous cellars of Zichron, built forty-two years ago by French architects, and modelled on those of Bordeaux.

The chief cellarer even had a Bordeaux accent : he showed us, after we had been provided with huge candles, over subterranean cellars vast as catacombs, where stand the cement cisterns called, by a charming euphemism, " amphoræ."

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Alack ! all the amphoræ which used to empty so quickly are to-day full. There is terrible depression in the trade ! America has "gone dry," Austria is ruined, Russia buys no longer, Palestine wines are forbidden in France.

There would have been no room for the new year's wine if the French army in Syria had not given heavy orders.

"Come and taste our wine, and tell me if it isn't as good as the finest vintages."

But first the implacable cellarer took us yet further to the upper cellars, and showed us strippers, washers, refreshers, troughs, pressers, and much other apparatus whose technical names I have forgotten: then he took us to the manager's offices, where, quite tired out, we found it necessary to comfort ourselves.

Here is Sauterne that makes one pine for oysters; a Médoc of the fruitiest, Frontignan which is true ambrosia. . . .

And being exhilarated with wine, we go on to Faradous, to Paradise, to drink in perfumes.

We almost drank in the fragrance round the orange-trees in full flower; orange-trees of a special essence, small, as round as apple-trees, and so covered with odorous blooms that one would think them huge, perfumed snowballs.

Round about stretch plantations of roses, jasmin, geraniums, mimosa, for in the near future a perfume-manufactory will be built here, by one of my Paris friends, in fact, a charming chemist who will make henceforth the most celebrated Syrian essences. . . .

In the gardens pretty Arab women are working, sonorous with their clanging jewels, and with them are Yemenite Jews, a poor, warped race, almost mummified

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by two thousand years' residence in the mysterious towns of Arabia, shut inside the Ghettos, without air or free space. They are only beginning bit by bit to stretch their cramped limbs, and get the sunshine into their skin. . . .

We turned back for tea to the hospitable family, and met a little springtime fairy, crowned with marvellous golden hair and dressed in rose muslin, Mademoiselle A. Her name is already known to me. I had met her brother previously while he was travelling in Tunis as a botanist: later he became famous by his discovery—at the foot of Hermon—of the original wild wheat that the savants had always sought.

I knew, too, of his tragic death after the War, when, bearing a message, his aeroplane came to grief in the Channel.

Vaguely, all the time I had been in Palestine, I had heard this numerous A. family spoken of: cited as model colonists, but yet around whom circled a grievous mystery.

And here was a young lady as spritely, as elegant, as she could be. . . .

"Come to us when you go," she invited me. "My brother often spoke of you, and there are still some of your books in the library that Djemal Pasha has not entirely carried off."

And we go along the boulevard of this hamlet of a thousand souls, which resembles the "mail" of some substantial provincial village, except that the provincial curiosity is lacking, for no one bothers about us, no one peeps through a window.

"Here is my father," says Mlle. A., when we meet an old peasant at a gate, his shirt-sleeves rolled up, his spade on his shoulder.

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"Shalôm!" he mumbles with indifference, as he goes into another building.

We go on towards a delightful garden: mandarins in fruit and in flower, Japanese medlars, hanging with amber balls; at our feet irises with the scent of fresh linen; wistarias falling in mauve and purple cascades from the top of an English-style cottage.

"Here we are," says Mlle. A., opening the door.

From the very threshold I was wonder-struck.

Three portraits look at you, three enlarged photographs that, why I know not, one feels to be dramatic. The room itself has something tragic about its curtains of dark green, black bookcases where missing books make lugubrious white blotches—botanical collections of a funereal odour: then in another room is English comfort, with dark leather desk-chairs, but the same sombre curtains, and the same portraits staring at one as if they would speak, and confide their mortifying secrets. . . .

One of the heads I recognise by the energetic brow, the determined chin: it is Aaron A., the finder of the original wheat, who perished in his aeroplane.

Another is a young woman of a brown, regular beauty and proud profile of Lucrece. And the third is a young man with a grievous Christ-like face.

"It is my mausoleum," the girl of the golden crown and rose-petal robe tells me. "Here lie all my dreams and all my hopes."

And she sinks, sobbing, into an armchair.

With consternation I sit down beside her. At last, drying her eyes with a cambric handkerchief:

"You knew my brother, and you know how he died. But you don't know what a comrade, what a friend he was to me! While still quite a child I was

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his secretary. I climbed the rocks for him: I dried his plants and arranged his collections. The marvellous, unique collection that Djemal Pasha carried off, we three classified them, he and I, and HE who was my betrothed. Look at his portrait! Was he not tender and beautiful? Oh! he was an idealist and a poet, a poet of Jewish resurrection, a true 'lover of Zion.' We three were so happy! Here we worked, here we read, here we dreamed, dreamed of the future Jewish fatherland, of our national renaissance. Sometimes we were four, for my sister, who was married in Egypt, often came on surprise visits. Oh, how we loved her! How beautiful she was! And she was the most ardent of us all, the most active. How she yearned for this Jewish fatherland, how she longed for our liberation! 'I would give my life for it,' she used to say. She did give her life, and he, too, my tender betrothed. . . . The War broke out, and we had but one idea, to free ourselves, to be free!—to free ourselves from the Turkish yoke, and see the Empire of David restored: but my fiancé was conscripted for the abhorred army. He had to fight against the Allies of our hearts, whose help we hoped for. He was accused of some crime or other. He was imprisoned, maltreated, then released—this photograph dates from his release from prison—then, again conscripted, he died somewhere in the sands of Sinai, how and why is unknown. . . . But she, she—oh, if you knew her martyrdom! Several times she came from Egypt at the peril of her life. She was accused of espionage. She was arrested, imprisoned. She was dragged—she, the beautiful, the pure, the proud—from town to town, among Turkish soldiers: from Jerusalem to Damascus, from Damascus to Nazareth. She was tortured to

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make her speak. She was believed to know important secrets, and they thought she would betray our dream and its dreamers. She was tied with her arms raised and hot bricks were pressed to her breasts. But she said nothing. Then it was decided to take her to Djemal Pasha, at Nablus. She knew what awaited her there. A friend got a revolver to her: she killed herself. . . . Oh, her poor, lovely body! On it were the marks of her torture. Alas! who will ever be able to write our history, the griefs of Israel, the ever-spring hope! Yes, you look at my dress. You are amazed that I dress like spring when eternal winter is in my heart? But our custom is for eight days of mourning only. We have no right to steal away our portion of life from the great stream of life. Let the dead bury the dead! Our grief must be interior, and to receive our friends, even in the midst of our despair, we must dress in bright colours. . . .”

Ah, Zichron! Zichron! “Commemoration.” I take away the memory of these studies changed to mausoleums, and of this frail girl, widowed before her time, who in fairy robes told me such pathetic happenings. What, then, is the strength of this dispersed race, that it can thus smile on its mourning?

In the evening Mlle. A. came to look for us. A marriage was being celebrated in Zichron. At the village hall there was dancing. It is an imposing building, and the hall is decorated with bouquets of myrtle—Astarte’s flower—and with palms. But it can scarcely contain the crowd of dancers, some from other colonies. The lads have put on long trousers, and the husband is in a dinner-jacket. Only a few

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Chalutzim wear their boots, and immaculate white *rubasckas*.

As for the girls, their elegance humiliates me. They inform me of the latest modes, of which I, who left France nearly three years previously, am still ignorant. Nothing but muslin and gauze gowns. All dance roundels, mazurkas, pavaues, even fox-trots: ending up in Cossack leaping and singing by the young pioneers.

Am I really in an agricultural colony—in Samaria, in Palestine?

I tell the young agricultural expert from Paris my amazement.

“ Yes, you are right,” he concedes; “ our population is much gayer than in an equivalent European village. And yet these young people are true peasants. To-morrow morning, at five o’clock, the men will be in the fields and the girls in the farms. And look at their hands! All have the hands of labourers. Mlle. A. herself, the elegant ” (she had changed her rose robe for an azure evening toilette), “ is an excellent house-keeper, who kneads the dough and makes the cheese, and when there is too much work in the fields she accompanies her father to prune the trees and train up the vines. . . . It is a characteristic of the Jews. We are labourers during our work, but, when we have finished with it, we like to bedeck our bodies and polish our minds. The Jew does not play cards, he does not frequent cabarets, but he loves dancing, music, and books. . . . Sometimes, even, we act comedies! . . . ”

Mlle. A. desires to go with us in the charabanc to Cæsarea.

“ Look, look ! ” she cries with legitimate pride as we

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leave the village, "look at our vines! They are the best-cultivated vines of all Palestine. Behold last night's dancer, working."

And we do indeed recognise the Cossack who leapt to the ceiling, in this youth in peasant's blouse.

Further off other Chalutzim are half-sunk in mud.

"They are draining these marshes, and canalising the celebrated Crocodile River, where the last crocodile was found only twenty years ago. It is said that the climate of this region resembles that of Egypt, and the Jewish National Fund hopes to grow rice and sugar-cane. . . . The farm is located in the one-time Roman circus of the town of Crocodipolis: all around one can still find many antiques, and the colonists have made a little museum. But at the moment we should find nothing. The whole farm is upside down. We are nearing the Feast of *Pesach*. Everything must be made clean. They whitewash the walls, repaint the furniture, wash the curtains, renew all the cooking implements. Not a grain of dust must remain for the feast whereon, for our ancestors, there began the era of liberty, the march towards the great pure spaces, toward beneficent suns, and starry nights. . . ."

So we passed on quickly, without worrying the farmers, simply shouting to them "Shalôm!"

Around the farm stretched diminutive trees.

"It is we who planted these firs," said Mlle. A. "We celebrate in February the birth of spring. Everyone, grown-ups and children, must plant trees. The most deforested spot is selected, and usually the young tree is dedicated to the memory of a man of good works, a poet, or a national hero, whose name it takes. In your country you put up statues; in ours, monuments are green and living. Thus this forest will be called



EUCALYPTUS FOREST, HEDERA: "SHOMER" ON GUARD.

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‘The White Farm,’ for everything there is white—cows, goats, poultry, rabbits, turkeys, even the cat, and everything comes straight from Holland. It is an experiment to find out whether these fine breeds from the *polders* will be able to acclimatise themselves in the meadow of the crocodiles. . . .”

The farmer, too, who was very white, came from the Netherlands, and among the Chalutzoth I saw one, whom they called Judith, as white as milk and, in her white cap and ivory neck, like the pretty Dutch girl on the advertisements of Van Houten’s cocoa. . . .

More fields, more flowers, asphodel, narcissus, “stars of Bethlehem,” mandragora, and many others whose name I knew not, but whom Mlle. A. recognises, classifies, and, as soon as I mention one particularly desirable, she leaps swiftly from the charabanc and runs to pick it with goat-like agility.

But behold the Mediterranean and Cæsarea, whose majestic and melancholy ruins are silhouetted against the sea and sky.

It is Cæsar’s city, built with unheard-of pomp by Herod the Great, and further embellished by Agrippa for Bernice, for whom this city was a favourite resort, and whither she came with Titus. St. Paul was prisoner here; here Origen taught; King Baldwin seized it, and discovered the celebrated Plate of the Last Supper, which received the blood of the Crucified One, the legendary Holy Grail, which inspired the mystical poetry of the Middle Ages, and urged forth so many knights on pilgrimage. . . .

Alas! the poesy of present-day Cæsarea is spoilt by tiled roofs. This time it isn’t the fault of the Jews. It is a colony of Bulgarians who came after the Russo-Turkish War. From afar one would think it a floating

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city. From nearby all is silence and desertion. Nearly all the houses are empty. Nearly all the Bulgarians are dead, carried off one after another by an incurable disease they brought with them. There are still a few men, aged-looking, exposing their sores to the sun, and a few rachitic children crawling about in the sand.

“The Jewish National Fund is negotiating for the purchase of these houses. . . .”

We sat down in the ruins of the ancient castle, which overhangs the sea like a ship's prow. The Crusader fortress is almost entirely destroyed: it was built of material existing before the time of Herod and Bernice's palace, whose rose, grey, and black columns of all shapes and sizes were embedded horizontally in the masonry like supporting beams. It was thought at the time that these stone giants would give greater solidity to the construction. To-day experts are convinced that it was precisely these rolling pieces which brought about destruction, by making the squared blocks slip. Now they lie there in hundreds, still very imposing, sleeping like vanquished heroes under the transparent waves.

What became of the statues, friezes, corner-stones? Broken up, doubtless, into mortar and rubble. And one is staggered at the thought of all the beauty of antiquity that the Crusaders destroyed: saddened by the barbarity of the Middle Ages, which built its fortified works with temple columns. . . .



HERZL STREET, TEL-AVIV.

CHAPTER XII

THE HILL OF SPRING

TEL-AVIV, Tel-Aviv, "Hill of Spring," hill full of life, how well you justify your name, built between the waves of your sea and the sea of your fragrances !

I remember the evening of our arrival !

The whole essence of spring hung over the plain it embraced. The palm-trees rocked gently against an opal sky, between rose minarets and mauve cupolas; in the distance the Mediterranean lay in a hollow of its golden reefs like a turquoise brooch. . . .

Then we saw no more: we drove between hedges of gardens; we journeyed through divine fragrances; the spirit of the mimosa and orange-blossom carried us away; and it was with our heads deliciously turned that we got out of our automobile in front of a modern villa of Tel-Aviv, the lively, the Jewish.

But that evening I didn't want to look at the little new town, arisen from the sands by Zionist sorcery, a few minutes from Jaffa, its patriarchal ancestor.

I wanted to go straight to Japho of the Philistines—Delilah was born in these purlieus—to mythological Jophey, where Perseus delivered Cepheus' city and rescued Andromeda, the sacrificial maiden bound to a rock, awaiting the sea-monster.

I knew very well the old, unchanging Jaffa. As a little girl I had often come here with my father, who used to embark on a black Leviathan—surely one of them had swallowed Jonah—for mysterious Europe. It was he who pointed out to me Andromeda's rock. After that, all the chains of the port became her chains, and when I battled with Ouarda, my sonorous

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nurse, I shrieked with terror, for each wave opened an amorous mouth to engulf my beautiful Bethlehemite.

To-day I scarcely recognise the Jaffa of earlier days. It has slipped from its rock to spread along the coast; tram lines run through its streets lined with European shops. Shall I rediscover *my* town, so amusing, so picturesque, with its houses plastered in ochre, sky-blue, rose, squashed strawberry; with its quay where the waves wetted you, and its little Turkish café where my father smoked his *narghileh* opposite an old, empty building that the sea filled with the tumult of its swell and with its salt smell?

The café has gone, and the building too. A whole quarter was demolished by the pickaxe to make room for pretentious buildings. But around them disorder has become more stubborn: the charming, artistic disorder of Oriental towns: a tree which looks over a crumbled wall, a stairway leading nowhere, an empty trellised balcony, still dark with mystery, a broken jar, full of flowers: and there still remain, despite all change, a riot of white houses with flat roofs running from Andromeda's rock to the sea, still making Jaffa, seen from the sea, worthy its title "Ladder of the Levant."

We hazard our safety in obscure vaults and steep alleys. But, oh, horror of horrors! they are full of rubbish and haunted by nauseating odours. (Alas! nowadays it is thus all over the East; one has to choose between filth and banality.) And is the picturesque charming if one can't breathe?

Swift, swift, then, let us abandon the phantom of my childhood, let us return to the Hill of Spring, to its embalmed gardens and salubrious air: yes, let us go back to the European villa, framed in cypresses:

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banal, maybe, but so cleanly comfortable, and so welcoming.

It is not a hotel, and it is not a vulgar boarding-house. It is a family which takes a few visitors who are recommended to it.

And at once we feel at ease round the long white table, gay with crystal and silver, where everyone speaks French, and where everyone is passionately interested in the things of the mind, and is far more *au courant* than I with developments in art and literature.

At the head of the table are Monsieur S. and his wife. He is dark, with a fine face, and very distinguished manners: he was born at Bucharest and lived for years in Paris. Madame S. is large, majestic, fair, a native of Russia: she preserves beneath her silver hair and in her blue eyes the radiance of a goodly beauty that one sees reproduced again at the other end of the table, rejuvenated and refined, in the features of her daughter, a *svelte* young woman, incomparably graceful.

A little boy eats by her side. I know that he is her son, that another, younger, is already asleep, and that three older ones, the eldest seventeen—is it possible, she who seems so young!—are being educated in Europe.

And I have been told the tragedy of their lives.

The father was ruined before the War, in unlucky enterprises, the mother's fortune was lost under Bolshevism; the daughter was married to a Tel-Aviv doctor, who was called away one day in winter to a patient in a colony. The doctor went off in his carriage, crossed the dry bed of a river, and stayed late with the patient, while the sky suddenly opened its sluices. On the journey home the dry river-bed is a torrent, a torrent which carries away horses and carriage, and he breaks his skull two thousand yards

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lower down on a rock. The woman and five children awaited him all night. His corpse was discovered the next day. The parents came from Europe. The scraps of prosperity remaining were put in common. The young woman has kept this house which was her home, where the great silver samovar and comfortable furniture recall a happy past.

And once again I admire the courage of heart of Israel, burying its misfortunes under serenity. For who would ever guess these successive griefs in the placid family atmosphere of this home, where everything breathes ease and gaiety, and where even the maids who wait impeccably at table are pretty and spruce, and are called, the dark one Shoushana, and the fair, Shoulamite.

We leave the table for the other half of the huge hall, separated by columns and opening on to a verandah where, on the sea-breeze, there come the perfumes of orange and mimosa. We gather in groups, we chat more intimately. Here is Monsieur C, the son of a Polish Chassidim rabbi, and now the director of a silicate factory at Tel-Aviv, who compensates for his feminine prettiness by his gravity of voice and gesture.

Here are the two brothers Poliakoff, far more Parisian than I, former railroad kings in Russia, former friends of the Tsar, and companions on Grand-Ducal festivities. Their parents were benefactors to Palestine. Many a hospital, many a school owes its existence to them; but completely assimilated, indifferent to Judaism, the sons did not feel themselves Jews until the day when, totally ruined and persecuted as capitalists, they managed to flee to Palestine with a few jewels.

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“ I know no more Hebrew than do you,” the elder confessed to me, “ but I have become an ardent Zionist.”

And Zionist, too, were the Tel-Aviv citizens who came to take coffee with us: Monsieur D., mayor of the Hill of Spring since the beginning of things, tall and big, imposing, with a clean-shaven witty face and Tartar cheek-bones. Monsieur T., the agricultural engineer, the author of a book, “ Jewish Colonisation in Palestine,” remarkable for its precision and lucidity; his wife, a Polish lady, Doctor of Law of the Faculty of Paris, hiding a Greuze face under a mass of golden hair. Monsieur B., an administrator of the colonies, holding the diploma of the Versailles horticultural school, of a wholly Parisian joviality. Monsieur H., a Hebrew writer and teacher of French at the Tel-Aviv secondary school, a Bachelor of Arts of Montpellier; his wife, her eyes the colour of honey, shining with intelligence and warmheartedness, the director of the Palestine kindergartens.

And all these people of different origin express themselves in perfect French, with a facility and eloquence that I envy. They would express themselves just as well, probably, in German or English, for nearly all have wandered over half the globe, and plumbed to the depths at least two cultures: and all, manufacturers and “ highbrows,” have the same dream, the same practical ideal: the reconstitution of a Jewish nationality and fatherland.

“ What a pity you didn’t come earlier ! We are in the Easter holidays. Our establishments are closed,” the mayor of Tel-Aviv tells me. “ We have a secondary school here of one thousand pupils and thirty teachers; elementary schools, kindergartens, a normal

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school, a conservatory for music, literary and scientific circles, gymnastic society, a popular library."

"In what language do you teach?"

"In Hebrew, naturally. It is needless to tell you that the horrible jargon Yiddish is pitilessly abolished. As for the other languages, English, French, German, we teach them as foreign tongues. Formerly it was otherwise: our children went to the *Alliance Israelite*, to the *Jewish College*, to the *Hilfsverein*, where Hebrew was only used as a liturgical language. It is our greatest triumph, and a thing unprecedented in history, to have made a language, dead for two thousand years, live again. And you mustn't imagine that between modern and ancient Hebrew there are the same differences as, for instance, between Italian and Latin, or even between the Arabic of the Koran and of the present day. No, the Hebrew of everyday speech is that of the Bible, the most classical and lyrical language that can be, and so palpitating with life, so powerful, that, shut up in the sepulchres of Israel, it has, from its first release, taken to itself every activity of life."

"But," I ask, "of what use this language, since it will never be spoken save in Palestine?"

"First of all," replies the Bachelor of Arts, "it will serve to recreate our Jewish soul, and accomplish our national unity. The Dispersion will exist no more on the day when we can all think in a common language. For don't imagine that Hebrew will remain confined to Palestine. Already in Russia for forty years, in America for twenty years, Hebrew is spoken and written. There are Hebrew poets, writers, printers, newspapers. I hope you will soon have a Chair of Modern Hebrew at your *École des Langues Orientales*. As a classical culture Hebrew could replace Latin and

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Greek, and when Jewish children are to be given a thorough education, they will be sent from every land of exile to our school at Tel-Aviv, just as non-Jews of all the world will come to study Semitic science at our University in Jerusalem."

"That will be the reverse of what happens now."

"Yes: you, for example, send your children born in the colonies to Paris. *Our* children, born in Paris, London, Vienna, Moscow, etc., will be sent to Judæa, as their motherland."

"But Palestine will never be able to hold all the Jews?"

"That isn't necessary. Look at Holland: she has only five million inhabitants in the Netherlands, and nearly as many in her colonies. Her wealth lies in her islands. She has been Queen of the Seas. Palestine, when its economic condition has been changed, will easily be able to give refuge to three million Jews. *Our* islands will be the continents. Those of us who prefer adventure or opulence will stay in them. The dimensions of the country matter little. The principle is to have a land of our own, and to exorcise for ever the tragic truth of Byron's verse:

The wild-dove hath her nest, the fox his cave,
Mankind their country—Israel but the grave!

"Yes, the principle is to have a land, however small. The Jew must enter into organic contact with the soil: we must have peasants who can turn over the earth, saying: 'It was the land of my forefathers, it is my land, it will be the land of my children.' On that day the legend of the Wandering Jew will have been."

"*Im yirzeh Hashem*" (If it pleases His name), says

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gravely the over-pretty young man, son of a Chassidim rabbi, and manager of a silicate factory.

On the next day Monsieur D., mayor of Tel-Aviv, comes to fetch us to see "his hill," which he founded fifteen years ago by building the first house. It developed rapidly into a suburb of Jaffa, from which it was separated only by half a league of sand-dunes.

To-day Tel-Aviv is a town of ten thousand inhabitants, absolutely autonomous, with its own municipality, its police, its electricity, its public hygiene and charities bureau, its public works, its hospitals, its schools, its station, its casino: and it hopes soon to have its port.

With its vast avenues, its public gardens, its villas surrounded by flowers, it is like a little Nice, with but one fault: that it is an architectural Babel. For here, for instance, side by side with a staid house such as we are staying in, is a chateau spiky with towers: further off a Moorish fort confronts a Scandinavian manor: over there a Dutch villa turns its back on an American cottage.

"Yes, I know," replies Monsieur D., his quick-witted head smiling on his fighter's body; "yes, it is possible to reproach me with my indulgence in matters of style. At the beginning I had such a longing to see building going on, to see this first uniquely Jewish town of Palestine grow, that I shut my eyes somewhat to its architecture. And then, I will tell you: what seems rococo to you is touching to me. I know the owners of every house; I know where, sometimes very penuriously, they amassed the money to come and build here. Some come from Mexico, others from Siberia. There are some from Germany and Tur-



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kestan. One meets people from Galicia and Persia. And every one has brought with him a particular vision, the house of some lord seen in the course of his wandering life, whose memory he has kept in the depths of some Ghetto, with the dream that he may dwell in one like it when he has 'gone home'—that is, when he is in Erez-Israel. So you see one must pardon my Tel-Avivans. And, too, apart from these infantine ambitions, there is a little melancholy homesickness in the choice of style, for the land where, all the same, they were once happy, founded families, and saved the money to come to the motherland. It is like a debt of gratitude to the alien land, of which they acquit themselves by reproducing here its favourite taste. Many of these houses are—how shall I put it?—commemorative monuments; it is, if you will, sentimental architecture; for the Jewish soul is far more tender and romantic than is thought.

"But," adds the psychologist mayor, "I have grown much more severe. Nowadays the plans have to be shown to me, and I often reject them. We are at present looking for a homogeneous style which shall be the Hebraic style."

"Without tiled roofs?"

"Certainly. Flat-terraced roofs or cupolas, cupolas a little flatter than in the Arab style."

We had come to a fine stone building rising from the ground.

"We will try our style on this building, which will be our synagogue."

"You haven't got one?"

"No. We thought it more useful to build hospitals and schools. Religion is a matter of conscience. Each man can pray in his own house. We Jews don't

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need a rabbi, who is only a Doctor of Divinity. Everyone can improvise *Chazen*, expound the *Torah*, and sing psalms. . . . But since the War we have had a clerical party—clericalism has blazed up at the same time in the four quarters of the globe: they accuse us of being anti-religious, of being atheist Zionists, of profaning the heritage of Jacob. That might lead to dangerous schisms among us at the moment when we have the greatest need for amity. So we are building a synagogue: it won't hurt anyone, and will conciliate everybody."

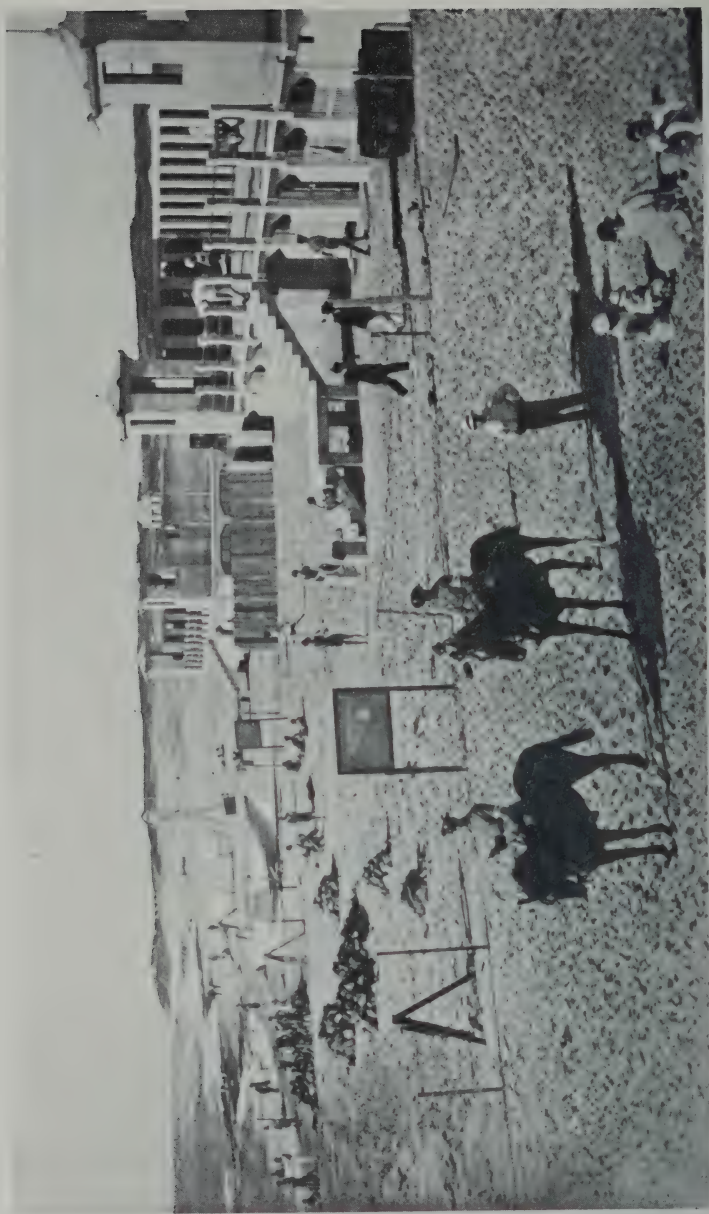
"And do you observe the Sabbath?"

"Officially, yes. All the shops are closed: no carriage plies. It is less a religious question than a national principle. The Sabbath differentiates Tel-Aviv from Jaffa, where the Christians celebrate Sunday and the Arabs Friday. And besides, it is better for trade. One sells to advantage when the other is closed."

We had gently descended to the sea, and climbed the terrace of a quite new casino.

The view took in the infinite blue: to the right the curve of Cæsarea—Bernice's Cæsarea—to the left the rock of Jaffa with its motley houses and pointed minarets. Behind us, the modern town of Tel-Aviv, and then, apart on the sand, a town of tents.

"It is the immigrant camp," the mayor informs me. "As soon as they disembark, they are disinfected, fed, equipped: then work is found for them. I try to keep the majority here for our building and manufactures. We have three already, the silicate factory which employs a hundred Chalutzim and turns out a houseful of bricks daily; a furniture factory; and one for chocolate which will soon be going. Two others are



TEL-AVIV: FORESHORE WITH NEW BATHING ESTABLISHMENTS.

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on foot, one for spinning—Palestine has plenty of wool—and the other for the manufacture of our orange-boxes which now absurdly come from Austria. . . . And when we have our port, when we shall be able to export the produce of our colonies direct, Jewish Palestine will live by itself. If there had been no war, it would have been accomplished already ! . . . But look over there, at our Chalutzim ! . . .” And we saw, coming out of the silicate factory and crossing the dunes, a long convoy of camels loaded with bricks and led by young men in khaki singlets and Beduin head-veils.

Living thus on the sands, with tents for dwelling-place, one would think it a second servitude in Mizraim.

“ It is three weeks since those fellows came from White Russia,” says Monsieur D., laughing, “ and one would take them for born camel-drivers. . . .”

CHAPTER XIII

THE GATE OF HOPE

ONCE more we drive between hedges of mimosa, recross the plain of proud palms, another immense plain, that of Sharon—"the excellency of Carmel and Sharon"—where a tribe of Jewish peasants are camping, who have come from Transylvania with their herds and their equipment, with their fine oxen, with black horns and silver markings. We skirt round *Tel Nabulium*, the Hill of Napoleon (how the Emperor haunts the Oriental imagination!), cross the Aujeh, "the Tortuous," or pull up at Petach-Tikrah, the "Gate of Hope," opening in truth on a paradise of oranges.

But how describe these gardens of the Hesperides, this enchanted city, where Aladdin's lamp gleams on each lustrous leaf, where little suns hang on every branch!

Here are winter oranges and summer oranges, with musk or raspberry flavours, mandarins in red copper, sanguine water-catchers, citrons as huge as gourds, with granulated bark, sour lemons, sweet lemons, seven-sided, ritual lemons—the *etrog*—that pious Jews hold in their hands together with the palm, the *lulab*, when they make the sevenfold round of the synagogue on the Feast of Booths.

And what of you, marvellous pompelmooses, round and pale as moons, with such fresh acidulated savour under your thick skins, that from the bottom of your aromatic tree we gather you above our heads and, like thirsty travellers in the desert, drink in your cool ambrosia?

It appears, O pompelmoose, that you come from

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California, and that there you are called, prosaically, *grapefruit*. But to us it seems—because of your name, doubtless—that you are the vermilion moss of some mysterious pampas, the promised fruit of a Canaan of another world. . . .

O springtime morning of Petah-Tikvah, where I went to hedge-school under the orange trees, I shall think of you with sad longing in the gloomy winters of Europe. Shalôm, golden apples of Judæa! Shalôm, O pompelmoose, may peace rest on your fragrant, tough skin and on your acidulous heart!

Further on is a factory for the export of oranges—of those celebrated oranges called “Jaffa,” which go all over the world, from Christiania to Chicago.

Unhappily the season for despatching is over. We cannot see the balls of light roll from the sacks into conduits where they are washed, brushed, dried, mechanically sorted according to their weight, enveloped in silk paper by girls, and thrown into cases to be taken to the port of Jaffa.

“These exports total millions of francs,” explains the amiable “horticulturist,” Monsieur B., “though since the War there has been a considerable falling-off because of Russia. In these last years we didn’t know what to do with them. They rotted on the trees. But Baron de Rothschild, who watches like a father over the colonies, has sent us a specialist: he will make lime-juice that will keep. . . .”

And more gardens, more orange-groves, where the little suns have given way to a fragrant snow, to myriads of white stars whose delicious smell at last becomes too much. . . .

The colony of Petah-Tikvah, inhabited by more than two thousand Jews engaged in the fruit industry,

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resembles, like Zichron, less a village than a thermal resort: great avenues, garlanded houses, an excellent restaurant where one lunches under a wistaria arbour, near a murmuring pool.

But beyond the peaceful gardens are trenches and barbed wire. They saved the Gate of Hope from pillage and destruction, it seems, in the last riots of Jaffa. A little neighbouring colony, less well protected, was completely sacked.

"And what are your relations with the Arabs like now?"

"Not bad. We keep on our guard. In this district there are many political agitators and many effendis whose interest it is to make trouble. And I think we were at fault, too, in the recent troubles. Uplifted by the Balfour Declaration, drunk with the national good fortune, Jewish workmen paraded through Tel-Aviv with patriotic banners. We were too noisy in our joy. It is a thing we have not yet learnt to do, since it happens too rarely: to conceal our gladness. . . ."

More establishments, more colonies; Mikveh Israel, a magnificent school of agriculture whose Director studied at Grignon, in Tunis, and in Algiers; Rishon-le-Zion, the First-of-Zion, with its famous cellars whose exquisite vintages we sampled. There, too, a complete slump in sales. The cisterns are full, but in order to help the unhappy colonists the ever-generous Benefactor has bought up the whole contents, and is now having made, to counter a fresh disaster, non-alcoholic wine, a sort of must destined for Mussulman clients. It is a tasty drink that I recommend to those who would follow the grape-cure all the year round.

At Ness-Zionah, the Eternal-of-Zion, we exchange



THE FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDATION OF THE COLONY OF RISHON-LE-ZION, ONE
OF THE FIRST JEWISH SETTLEMENTS IN JUDEA.

In the main street of the colony, decorated for the festival.

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our automobile for a carriage that takes us on a sandy track, between dunes planted with vines and bordered by the redoubtable spiky mimosa, which rain down on us their heady golden petals.

Young Arab horsemen gallop before our carriage.

"That is how I want to see the children of our colonies. A few years ago the Jew was not allowed to ride a horse. The ass was his charger. If a Mussulman met him on a horse, he could make him dismount, take his place, and oblige him to walk alongside holding the bridle. . . . And this track, by no means handsome—if you knew what trouble it needed to get it! For if the Government at last allowed Jews to buy land, it prohibited them making roads to their farms. We had to pay for every mile of our roads, and build them at our own cost. In the War, however, we had no complaint against Djemal Pasha: he needed wood, but he had the kindness to consult me as to which trees should be cut down."

We still followed an Australian eucalyptus forest, destined for orange packing-cases, and we entered a colony which, this time, looked like a real village.

It is Rechoboth, "May God Increase," the native colony of my first guide, who had now returned to Damascus.

And it is his father who receives us, a good giant with the head of a toothless lion, and by his side a young boy who passes him in height and breadth.

"One could really say one was in the land of King Og and his Rephaim," I said.

"Yes," he replies, laughing. "You already know one of my sons. This is the son of my daughter. He is twelve years old. He was born here. . . . But our beginning, I assure you, had nothing royal or

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gigantic. When we came thirty years ago we lived in grottoes, because the Turkish Government would not give us permission to build houses.

“ But, by good fortune, if Jews had not the right to dwell under a roof, the cattle of the Jew had, for cattle are the wealth of the country. So we built stables for our oxen, and then we had the idea of building them for ourselves. The inspectors came: ‘ More stables ? ’ ‘ Yes, your Excellencies, we expect more cattle from Russia. ’ ‘ Good: but no windows, and only one door. ’ Sometimes when they found window-slits they made us knock down our walls. But an Ottoman law stipulates that no building covered with a roof can be called in question. So we hastened to get the roof on: we worked rapidly, rapidly: sometimes we worked through the night. When the roof was on we were saved, and afterwards we could enlarge and multiply the apertures. And we took advantage of the Ramadan, when the inspectors did not come. Our synagogue, begun as a farmyard, was finished in the months of a pilgrimage to Mecca. Naturally, that didn’t help the beauty of the architecture: and you can understand now why our houses have æsthetic deficiencies. And it must be admitted, too, that we were guided by a desire for economy, for Rechoboth is not, like most of the Judæan colonies, a favoured child of ultra-rich philanthropists. Ten families of us came here thirty-five years ago with our small savings. It was a point of honour with us to do everything with our own money and our own hands. Unhappily, we were without experience, and the country was very unhealthy. In the first two years more than half of our number died, and we often had difficulty in getting together the ten Jews necessary

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for prayer. But Adonai has blessed our efforts: he has increased our families and our lands; now, as in the time of King Solomon, every Jew can repose in the shade of his vine and his fig-tree. . . . Let us go up that hillock to get a bird's-eye view of the countryside."

And the good toothless lion, this time between two Rephaim, led us up a sand-hill.

We dominated Rechoboth, with its hundreds of houses, its synagogues, its *beth-ha-midrash*, and its *Cheder*, and, at the extreme eastern limit of the country, another hamlet with such diminutive houses that one would think it a Tom-Thumb colony.

"They are the houses of our Yemenites: those tribes who lived in Arabia for two thousand years. We were the first to have the idea of bringing them to Palestine, for, completely assimilated to the Arabs, they might serve as a half-way house between us, who came from Russia, and the natives. But the unfortunate Yemenites were so rotten with tuberculosis, so atrophied by their Ghetto life, that they had not the strength to wield a pickaxe: and at first, instead of helping us, they were a source of worry. But there, too, God has come to our aid. He has expanded their lungs and strengthened their muscles. And, diminutive as they are, they are a solid, enduring, hard-working race; and, having retained their skill, these Yemenites are very useful for small-scale work: they graft trees, prune the vines, look after the bees: and they, too, carve our tombstones and say *Kaddish*—they are very pious—for the repose of our souls."

"And what is that village over there with tiled roofs?"

"It is an Arab village that has enriched itself by

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our proximity. To-day the fellahs cultivate their fields like ours, and even their houses are being modernized, as you see: they have adopted our tiled roofs because they are so much more practical and less costly than their flat terraces. They live on very good terms with our Yemenites, whose *Chacham* they often consult in disputes with strangers, or even with their own families. For the laws and customs of the Arabs are almost textually the same as those of the ancient Hebrews. The *Chacham* has only to open his Pentateuch. . . . Here"—King Og stuck his stick in the ground—"here in this spot we are going to build in the autumn, with our own funds, a sanatorium for four hundred tuberculous orphans who will be sent from Russia. The district ravaged by malaria has become, thanks to our work and our trees, one of the healthiest places in Judæa. People come to Rechoboth to undergo fresh-air and grape cures."

And turning to the setting sun where the dunes were melting into the narrow blue riband:

"It is the Mediterranean. The slopes of this hill and of all the sand-hills you see before you will be planted with castor-oil bushes, as wine has no longer any sale. Their fruit will provide oil, and their leaves will feed a new species of silk-worm which is being brought us from China, and which spins seven cocoons each year. Soon Rechoboth—if it pleases His name—will have silk factories and a factory for aeroplane-engine oil. And, further, these castor-oil plantations will be better than tamarisk against the encroachment of the sands."

"What is that white point on the horizon?"

"That white point? . . . It was the salvation of Israel. It is to it that we owe it that we are still a

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people among the nations. . . . It is Jabneh or Jamnia, where Johanan-ben-Zakkai obtained Vespasian's permission to open a school for children after the destruction of Jerusalem. The children's school soon became a rabbinic academy, whence came forth, when it had been transferred to Tiberias, the Mishna and the Gemara, our talmudic books, which have preserved the Hebrew tradition and language from destruction."

CHAPTER XIV

JERUSALEM

FOR the last time we crossed the excellency of Sharon the glory of its gardens and loaded trees.

For the last time the essence of mimosa and orange breathed on us a delicious exaltation. The palms give us benediction with their branches: Peace be with you! Peace be with you! We in our turn greet the blue sheet of the Mediterranean . . . the enchantment has disappeared behind us.

We pass Ramleh, with its white cemetery amidst the olives, its square Lydian tower, English camp, sheds, railway—and our motor speeds on toward the solitude of the Judæan hills.

We follow the very ancient caravan route, where once pious paladins rode: where, as a child, I too drove along, on a noisy charabanc with a "Templar" driver, counting anxiously the sixty upstanding Turkish towers that were to defend us from attack, but which did not protect us from stones and rubbish which more than once caused accidents (on one occasion we were thrown into a ditch).

And how often were we not delayed by those thousands of Slav pilgrims in sheepskins and felt boots, pious flocks journeying to Jerusalem, singing sad canticles and walking without seeing anything, neither camels nor Arabs nor my handsome nurse from Bethlehem seated by the side of the Templar. At the halts they lifted their eyes and staffs to the arid mountains, to the abrupt defiles, and with stupefaction these inhabitants of the steppes and fertile plains cried out: "What stones! What stones!"



KIRYATH ANAVIM, DILB : A ROCKY HILLSIDE—TREE PLANTING.

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To-day the brigands have disappeared, and the Russian peasants too: the road is so smooth that we can traverse it in two hours: but the desolation remains the same, and seems even more overwhelming, even more sardonic, by contrast with this civilised road. And, like the Slavs, we murmur, frightened: "What desolation, what death!"

O mountains of Judæa, "Mountains of the Lord," what anathema is it hangs over you? Is it the anger of your jealous God that has stricken you because your high places have worshipped other gods, have worshipped Ashtaroths under the fragrant trees? Truly, the horrific biblical threats have come to pass. You are no longer mountains, but mere skeletons of mountains, carcasses of rocks whose flesh has been carried away by the torrents of centuries. Is it possible that you were the good, the excellent land where flowed milk and honey, the Canaan coveted by so many peoples? Is it possible, O immobility, O death, that you are still coveted, and that blood was spilt lately for possession of your petrified nothingness?

Take, take, children of Israel! Divide up your jackals, lairs, distribute your heritage of thistles and stones! They who dispute your right on paper will flee before the horror of the reality. It needs a disinherited house like thine, Jacob, and lovers infatuated with chimerical Zion to reclaim a fatherland so devastated!

Grey, grey, desolate, terrifying, the mountain chains spread out: gorges follow one another, wherein our automobile climbs, zigzagging and filling the solitude with exhausted gasping.

At rare intervals, a coppice of trees, a block of houses clinging to the rock—a Christian brotherhood or Jewish

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colony—both possessing equally the power to exorcise aridity.

Then the mysterious torpor, the strange greyness, holds sway again, so monotonous, so obsessive that one feels almost relieved when one comes to great buildings with tiled roofs, a whole modern suburb of Jerusalem, made, however, to disillusion the sentimentalist.

But Heaven be praised! This banal town that comes, a Foolish Virgin, to open its arms to the stranger on each side of the Jaffa road, heaven be praised that it is only there for the better protection of the other, the wise Zion, whose immortal beauty has not suffered from the centuries nor conquests.

The latter is seen better if one comes, as I did the first time, by train through the Valley of Terebinths, and gets out in the plain of the Philistines, at the foot of the City of David. Then one sees it above one, on its haughty, mournful hill, enclosed by crenellated walls, like a Jerusalem in a missal; tender and distant like a dream-Zion in the softness of the evening, against the pallor of the sky. . . .

The inns of the old town being full up, we pulled up at the great fashionable caravanserai, the Hotel Allenby. It redeems the banality of its tourists by its tall Sudanese with their long white robes of priests of Isis, and by a few Slav "little mothers" that the War forgot in the "Russian buildings," who have kept their mystic pilgrims' eyes under their servants' caps.

It is Tuesday, the eve of the celebrated *Seder* of Pesach of the Jews, and of the Ash Wednesday of every sect of Christendom. For by a rather rare coincidence the different Easters, instead of spreading

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themselves over the whole month, this year have made a rendezvous in the first week.

And, moreover, the Muslim pilgrimage of Nebi-Mousa—of the Prophet Moses—coincides with Nazarene and Jewish feasts and adds to the anxiety in Jerusalem, where religious ceremonies often develop into homicidal fervour.

This year Israel in particular feels menaced by a revival of Muslim fanaticism, tacitly approved by the Christian confessions, whose sects forget their rivalry in a common hatred of Zionism.

These poor Jews have not forgotten the pillaging of their Ghetto and the massacres near the Wailing Wall two years ago, at the same season, when the religious fanatics, with cymbals, banners, and howling dervishes at their head, came back from the traditional tomb of he who, buried by God's own hand in a place known to none, sleeps in the Idumean desert; came back from adoration of that same prophet whose work it was to lead the Hebrews into the lands which now are disputed.

And so, despite the vigilance of the British, who have allowed the pilgrims to enter the city only in little groups, the Jews are not very much reassured, and it is in diminished numbers that they "go up" according to the ancient usage of Palestine, to celebrate the solemnities of Unleavened Bread at Jerusalem. And those of Jerusalem, too, go about less from quarter to quarter in holiday attire, wishing one another: "A happy Easter!"

It is as if a shadow veiled the joyfulness of the season.

But we saw nothing of it as we made merry on the eve of the *Seder* with those who had no home, with

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travelling Jews, tourists, or commercial travellers, gathered together at the Hotel Central, inside the walls and near the tower of David, owned by the Andursky brothers, sons of a famous rabbi and themselves noted for their piety. And so the ceremony was to take place according to the strict rites, the most ancient in the world, observed by Israel for more than three thousand years with fervent fidelity, and for the Zionists symbolic of new hopes. . . .

In the immense hall on the first story a hundred places are laid on several tables gay with glass and candelabra, each one presided over by a venerable head of a family or by a doctor of the law.

I had the luck to be invited to the table of the famous Viennese cantor, Monsieur Morgenstern, whom I heard on the Sabbath at Tiberias.

I was given a little book, the *Haggadah* with Hebrew-French text, which allowed me to follow the ritual of this feast of liberation.

And while the men cover their heads (it is always a little astonishing to see men of society manners wearing hats indoors) and the women lower their eyelids modestly, the cantor sometimes sings psalms and sometimes chants the wondrous history, from the hard servitude in *Mizraim* and the saving of the infant Moses by Pharaoh's daughter up to the "passage" of the angel over the dwellings of the Hebrews (*Pesach*, whence *pascal*, means to pass over), and the exodus so sudden that the dough had not time to rise, and the women cooked thin strips on their heads as they walked in the sun.

It is in commemoration of this exodus that Israel will eat for eight days this bread of misery, and that we eat bitter herbs and wild lettuce soaked in salt water,

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and between two pieces of mozza, a delicious date and cinnamon jam, representing the clay of the Egyptian bricks, and also the mud of the Red Sea that the forefathers crossed miraculously.

And it is to recall this blessed exodus and the emigrant's burden that the chief throws over his shoulder a napkin folded in four; but here, in Erez-Israel, he does not grasp the nomad's staff, for he has come into his own, his wandering life is over.

At each table-head is placed a hard-boiled egg, a branch of hyssop, and a mutton-bone "burnt in the fire," emblems of purity of heart, tribulation, and the Paschal Lamb, which no Jew has immolated since the fall of the Temple, but which certain ultra-pious Jews think of sacrificing once more.

And when the cantor sings the consecration of the *Aphikomen*, which equals the solemn splendour of Catholic plain-song, when he breaks the unleavened bread and blesses the cup of wine, I cannot help envisaging with emotion, a few paces away, up there on the hill of Zion, another solemn repast, another Supper, and I hear a divine Galilean say in this same tongue, to his disciples heavy with sadness—holding out to them bread and wine:

"Take, eat; this is my body. . . . I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom. . . ."

The Benjamin of the gathering is asked the ritual questions: the door is opened to let the prophet Elijah enter: and the true festival of Pesach begins, interrupted by messianic psalms and joyful canticles, and again by childish, touching stories like that of the "kid that my father bought that the cat ate that the dog devoured," etc., intended to keep the children

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awake in this beautiful family rejoicing, which is a little like Christmas for our people.

And the ceremony ends with the sacramental phrase, with the colossal hope that has made the Chosen People live on for twenty centuries: Next year in Jerusalem !

And it is like a tremendous promise, like a national vow, that those hundreds of voices send from table to table, and which I hear with deep emotion :

“ *Lashaana habha Biyerushalayim Habnuya !* ”

We went on to the roof of the hotel, whence one has one of the finest views over Jerusalem. And beneath the pale pascal moon that floods us with its brilliance I recognise with ravishment my childhood's visions: the Jaffa gate with its pointed spikes, where I had feared to pass in front of the Turkish soldiers; the moats that I saw filled with the blood of knights; the austere tower of David with its grey barbican; the house where I was born with its twin cupolas fanned by the solitary palm-tree of the town; the lagoon of Bethlehem, over which I often hung and breathed in the poesy of the Bible; and behind, marching over the unequal hills, the whole city of domes, bulbs, minarets: toward the vast Haram-Esh-Sherif in its blue enamel dream. Beyond it the ramparts, beyond them Cedron, the Mount of Olives disfigured by the monstrous Teutonic tower; and further still—is it a dream or reality, O moon?—the pale mountains of Moab that wrapped me in their mournful sorcery. . . .

The brothers Poliakoff, the friends of Grand Dukes, and Monsieur K., the young director of the silicate works, whom I met at Tel-Aviv, had come to Jerusalem to celebrate Easter, and had climbed up with me.

One of the brothers was deeply moved.

“ What a fine ceremony ! It is more than twenty

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years since I took part in a *Seder*, and here, above all, in the very City of Zion, this Hebrew feast gathers intense significance !”

“ For my part,” replies the over-pretty manager in his rabbinic voice, “ for my part I am disillusioned. I haven’t re-experienced the emotion I expected, and for which I came. Oh, this pascal feast in a real Jewish family ! I remember : we were sitting around my father, and we looked steadily at the brimming cup on the middle of the table. We knew that Elijah the prophet was coming, the prophet of goodness, the patron of children. . . . And when, in a sudden silence, the door opened and my father said, ‘ Hosannah to he who comes in the name of the Lord ! ’ when he entered, when he looked at us, when he emptied his cup, when he blessed us . . . oh, how I trembled ! . . . and when at last we rose and, silent, our eyes turned towards heaven, we held communion in our thoughts with the whole dispersed nation, with all our holy people, with entire Chosen Israel dispossessed of its heritage, exiled from its island, shamed, persecuted, and yet at that moment sending its salute to Jerusalem from every part of the planet with the unshakable conviction that its desire would be fulfilled . . . ah ! I assure you I wept with joy and grief : but this evening I was scarcely touched. . . . No, our Easter is an intimate festival, a festival in the Hebrew language. There must not be strangers ; there must not be modern Jews in evening dress who follow the ritual, in *haggadas* in English, French, German. And then who knows ? Here, perhaps, we are too near to our dream, we stand on the stones of the city of our kings, . . . while Yerushalayim, Yerushalayim, what magic thou hast when thou art inaccessible, when thou art

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a hope and not a reality ! No, in Palestine you can't love Zion. The true Zionism is in the Ghettos of sombre towns; it is in the yearning of the galut."

Down below they were still singing. The Jerusalem *chazan* had joined Viennese Monsieur Morgenstern.

They sang as did the singers of two thousand years ago the canticles of David for "the eight-stringed harp," about "the hind of dawn," or the "lily of love," or the "dove covered with silver," marking the rhythm by clapping hands and snapping their fingers.

In front, David's tower has lost its withdrawn look and wall-grey colour. Silvered by the moon, it leans toward the roof of the Hotel Central, it leans to listen to the gay refrain of the cantor from the barbicans, recalling the youth of its King when, crowned with flowers and playing his flute, he loved to dance the Shepherd's dance. . . .

On the following days the religious ceremonies of the various confessions follow one another in the holy city. I didn't know which sanctuary to visit, which procession to watch, or whether to tremble before ferocious fanaticism or be touched by naïf hopes.

While the Muslim pilgrims depart by the Jaffa gate, leaping furiously in a sword-dance to the hypnotic din of cymbals, other pilgrims enter by the Damascus gate, preceded by a cross, but also dancing from time to time a wild saraband and chanting a canticle to the Virgin in the same savage cadences.

In the streets the most varied possible crowd drifts about, and with delight I rediscover in the archaic quarters my Jerusalem of other days, still, despite tourists and Zionism, one of the most Oriental of all cities.

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Oh, the sloping market where on polished rose cobble-stones among jars of milk and vine-leaf baskets walking about on the heads of the fellahin, a whole cascade of camels slips along !

And the vaults of the time of the Templars, here and there pierced with an outlook, under which, in a cloud of golden dust, like flaming angels—a moment after to re-enter the penumbra—pass Samaritans in long white tunics; Nazarenes in sleeves ending in rattling bouquets of sequins; peasants from Siloah crowned with Astarte's crown; Christians of Bethshalah and Ramala in their little jerkins of orange, amethyst, emerald velvet, with silken arabesques, and straw hats.

I shall never forget the cortège I met on a sloping stairway-alley. Men of Bethlehem in floating black mantles, followed by women who trailed behind them their long, pointed sleeves and the veil that covered the golden headdress, whose silver chinpiece, sonorous with old medallions, fell on an embroidered breastplate.

They carried on their heads baskets full of roses—to scatter their petals around the dying Jesus—and seeing them thus defile between the ancient walls I felt almost overcome, not knowing whether by this marching poesy or by the fragrance of their roses. . . .

They often encountered, these pleasing figures, other groups no less picturesque, though more austere with orthodox Ashkenazim dressed as Levites in splendid colours crowned with round fur caps. They seemed to me multiplied and regenerated in my absence. Formerly, I remembered, there were only a few dirty, diseased old men, dragging trembling limbs with Mosaic afflictions in their other-world garments: or else they were rabbis, sacristans, psalm-reciters, men of tradition who in this ebullition of the

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past liked everything, even to the memory of their servitude, of their humiliating dispersion in Russia, Poland, Galicia.

But the Ashkenazim of to-day do not bear the stigma of exile. They are young, they are vigorous. Their mantles of thick velvet or new satin fold eurhythmically around their feet, and handsome, healthful faces with silky locks are framed by the *stramel* with its soft shadow.

Born in Palestine, they have rediscovered their ancestral dignity; they wish to wear in freedom the costume once imposed on them as an indignity by their persecutors, not in memory of a servile past, but in pride, as a mark to differentiate them from the *goyim*, and to affirm their nationality.

They contrast strangely, these outworn groups, with the other Jews of Palestine; the Zionists above all, who are completely Europeanised, have given up external religious practices, and wander through David's city far more as tourists than as pilgrims.

And yet these "Conservatives" are Zionists too: old-time Zionists who hope to win Zion by their prayers, and await the Messiah, who shall Himself lead His scattered people toward the sacred country.

Sometimes children walk beside their elders, dressed identically, shaking their curls, and carrying under their arms the fringed shawl, or holding in their hands the ancient *sidur*.

They go thus to the synagogues in the very ancient Jewish quarter, following a labyrinth of tortuous alleys and steps: and I love to watch their fine cloaks lighting up or dimming as they catch the rich colours thrown by the vaults, then disappearing into undifferentiated masses.

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And these sable hats among these warm stones and ardent walls bring I know not what disturbing and voluptuous contrast; a vision of some glacial region golden in the Judæan sun, a Rembrandt tableau transported to a Hierosolymite landscape !

On Good Friday one would think oneself in a city of madmen.

While in the basilica of the Holy Sepulchre savage hordes besiege the divine tomb, while women rend their garments with cries like the weepers for Adonis, while on the terrace of the church the Abyssinians with horns, parasols, and children's rattles keep up a diabolic farandol chanting an Ethiopian incantation, while over there in the vast esplanade of the Haram-Es-Sherif the pilgrims who have returned from Mount Nebo dance a dishevelled round in honour of Moses: Israel, separated from them only by a wall, "the western wall," Israel whence arose both the God and the prophet; they are weeping, Israel weeps in its turn, with the same vehemence and almost identical contortions, the defunct majesty of the Temple, and the lost glory of the dissolved nation. . . .

I went there, too, going half-way down from the holy Muslim quarter along the ancient, delightful street, interlaced with vaults that follow one another on so steep a slope that they intermingle their successive ogives. High chambers raised on arches hang over you with their machicolated balconies, spy on you with their narrow coupled windows surmounted by stone cupolas, which the wild capers embrace with their monstrous spider claws.

We turn past a ruined Muslim oratory to enter the most miserable Ghetto, where live as holy mendicants,

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among heaps of filth and crumbled walls, the Mogh-rebin Jews, who, crouching by their dwellings and wrapped in a dirty white *burnous*, look like mushrooms growing on manure.

By a steep and sordid stairway—it is difficult to understand this negligence—one debouches into a kind of corridor where, unexpected, monumental, there stands Israel's most remarkable ruin, the *Kotel Ma'arabi*, a western buttress of the outer wall of Solomon's rampart. It extends for twenty yards, mixed up with other buildings, at its base made of cyclopean blocks like those of the town-wall of Jerusalem, diminishing toward the top, which is of blocks or ordinary size, recently restored. (Apropos of this restoration, Mr. Storrs, the Governor of Jerusalem, told me that he had all the trouble in the world to prevent the wall from crumbling on the heads of the Jews. They wouldn't have it touched by Muslims, and as these latter go by it into the Haram-Es-Sherif, they in turn refused to allow Jewish masons. Finally, it was repaired by Armenians: but it all but brought Jerusalem to fire and the sword.) There is nothing in this passage, no ornament, nothing but the majestic nudity of this giant wall, except near the entrance, cut into the first block, a niche where burns "the lamp of the soul."

It is there that the women gather who had already come in the afternoon. Most of them, who are aged, wear satin perruques of the colour of dead leaves, and across their shoulders woollen print shawls. Many hold the ritual lemon between their dried fingers, or else a little bouquet of aromatic plants, which they offer one amiably, in memory of the wild fragrances burnt on the altar of perfumes, so agreeable to the Lord of Hosts.

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And now the men come, one by one or in little groups, often accompanied by children. They go straight to the wall, which they kiss devoutly—just like the pilgrims to the Holy Sepulchre—then, lifting their babes in their arms, they make the fresh childish cheeks caress these ancestors of stone.

And everyone takes up again his habitual place according to his age or rite: the old men touching the wall, the young ranged behind them. In the middle the Ashkenazim, because they are the most numerous, in Levite robes and fur hats: then the Sephardim in Islamic mantle and black turban; and right at the end Persian and Babylonian Jews; then they of Bokhara with their kabalistic garments and magician's astrakhan bonnets. And all, standing before these milliennary stones, begin by reciting the Eighteen where Yerushalayim is so passionately remembered: "Take pity, King of Kings, on Jerusalem, Thy city; Zion, the house of Thy glory; the Empire of Thine anointed David, and this great, holy Temple upon which Thy name rested."

The prayers become more and more fervent: the worshippers become agitated, they bow down, they sway in cadence with the rhythm of the ancient psalms, in cadence with the prophetic lamentations that Israel has cried to the throne of its God for nearly two thousand years, from the depths of its sorrow, from the depths of its immortal hope.

To-day, on Easter Friday, their fervour is still more touching, their zeal more frantic. They think with greater emotion of the sacred, wandering nation: the Ashkenazim in particular think with despair of all the mourning caused by the debacle of Russia; of those thousands of relatives and co-religionists, expelled,

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ruined, starved to death, carrying with them the dreams and fortunes of Judaism. . . .

Perhaps, too, they think of the recent agitations in Palestine, of suddenly reawakened hatreds, of this home which is disputed them, of possible troubles; and as the ancient national grief has added to it their individual sorrows, the invocations become more vehement, the reverences more precipitated. Some click their nails like rattles, others double up their bodies deliriously, automatically, that they may become divine machines, only: nothing save beings abandoned to prayer, in holy hallucination.

From time to time a sudden silence, an absolute immobility, covered faces. It is the *Shema Israel* that each must recite very low, in his heart: "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is One. Blessed be His name."

Then the voice of the officiating rabbi begins again, and the pious inclinations commence anew. . . .

Behind the hypnotised army, in the narrow space left in the corridor, a few old men too weary to stand up are seated against the stone, following with indulgent eyes the little children who play in this august spot as if it were a school playground.

And tourists, too, come to look on disdainfully, or to take photographs, and behold, a mangy donkey, driven by a fellah, brushing the fine mantles with its burden and disappearing at the other end of the passage. . . .

A little while after, from the other direction, come Arab women, going to fetch water and taking along a sheep tied by its horns. It would seem as if these people deliberately intrude on Israel's sacred hour, or that they are acting on orders. (I informed myself

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of the facts. It appears that this wall of the Temple has never been conceded to the Jews. It is a mere tolerated right to pray that they bought dearly from the Sultan, a right that can be withdrawn at any time. And in order to emphasise its ephemeral character, better to prove to them that they are on foreign soil, a passage has been made to a few wretched tenements inhabited by Muslims, that all the gold of the Jews has not been able to acquire. But now that Palestine is under an English mandate, this lack of respect for the most authentic sanctuary in the city where the most apocryphal altar is respected seems incredible and revolting. The protection of the Holy Places that is so much spoken of to-day must extend to the Wailing Wall. I appeal to the dignity of mankind and to the League of Nations.)

But the fervent worshippers seem not to notice these humiliating vexations, so absorbed are they in their prayers or their holy conversation. For those who can approach the Wall speak very low, tell their confidences to the Fathers of their Fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, buried in the cave of Machpelah, under a mosque forbidden to their descendants: but whence, on great occasions of solemnity, they steal away to come here to hear the entreaties of their unhappy children.

The daylight is failing. The women have long ago withdrawn. The waistcoated band go too (so much the better; their scrimped costume lessens the millennial majesty of the stones and makes their devout gestures, fitted for ample vestments, ridiculous). The Sephardim go too; then, one by one, the Ashkenazim, except a fine group of four old rabbis, in orange, amethyst, copper and mauve mantles—what

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exquisite harmony of soft, warm tones against the gigantic grey wall—who continue their groaning and swaying. And yonder, at the far end, pressed into a corner, a frail, thin silhouette that I had not noticed, and that is not out of place, despite the modern tailed coat and soft hat, because of the moving grief that shakes his shoulders with heartfelt sobs. What can this young man be weeping? A lost fortune or a shattered faith? I cannot see his face, buried in his hands. At last he rises, he goes off upright and “correct,” apparently consoled, doubtless bearing away the pardon of the Patriarchs, ever accorded to the prodigal son. . . .

The four rabbis stay on, multiplying their reverences to the ancient stones.

Night falls. One can no longer distinguish the colours of their fine mantles, only the sombre, round soft hat caressing Solomon’s wall: one would think them furry crowns, homage from the polar regions to the Temple of Jerusalem. . . .

And even when the Sabbath stars shine in the firmament, they are still there, still adoring, imploring, kissing the sacred ruin, clinging to the rampart of holiness.

One would think them devout shadows; then the shadows of those shadows, entering into the Shades that haunt the ancient wall. . . .

On the following morning, with furious, maddening tom-toms, the adorers of Moses definitely left the city between lines of Hindu lancers and British machine-gunners, bearing away a ferocious regret that they had not been able to pillage the Ghetto nor massacre the Jews.

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The same day, in the basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, also between lines of soldiers, and under the eye of the English Governor, there took place the famous ceremony of the Sacred Fire, equally wild, but this time ending without fanatical excesses.

To Jerusalem, now delivered from its pilgrims, there hastened Jews from Galilee, from Samaria, from Haifa and Tel-Aviv, from towns and colonies.

For them Pesach was just beginning, pascal joy was overflowing from reassured hearts.

The Hotel Allenby, already a little reminiscent of Egypt with its tall Sudanese in robes of priests of Isis, now becomes entirely so, with its turbulent, busy, cosmopolitan crowds.

The Israelites, who are in great numbers, eat apart, in the "Kosher" dining-room, because of the unleavened bread. But they join the other travellers in the great hall for the tea-time orchestra, and in the evening, when the frivolities of the dance invade even austere Jerusalem.

At the Allenby one meets every personality in Palestine, from the young and handsome mufti in his white turban and the Armenian archimandrite veiled in black, to the Zionist leaders—Monsieur Van Vriesland is very elegant—the English Governors—he of Beersheba is very attractive—the Emirs of Transjordan, the exiles from Damascus or Lebanon, adherents to the King of Mesopotamia, or fanatics for the independence of their mountains.

And I saw there, too, my colleagues of the Hierosolymite Press: Monsieur Saphir, who, a lieutenant in the French Army, entered Jerusalem side by side with Georges Picot and Allenby, and now directs a great Hebrew daily and an English periodical; Ben Avi,

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“ son of my father,” son of Ben Jehuda the renovator of the holy tongue, who was the first child to babble its syllables in vulgar speech; his wife and collaborator, a Sephardi woman of exquisite taste; the admirable painter Bernstein, a pupil of Bonnat; Monsieur Rivlin, the great Arab scholar and the author of a Hebrew Koran, and his ravishing bride, a Babylonian of the line of King David; Doctor Klausner, who had recently published in Hebrew a “ Jesus of Nazareth ” so favourable to the divinity of the Galilean that he was cut off from the community of the synagogue, as was Ernest Renan from the bosom of the Church, for the over-great humanity of *his* “ Life of Jesus.”

And here, too, is Rabbi Kuk, a convinced Zionist and a charming idealist, dreaming paradoxically of restoring the ancient sacrifices and establishing a house of prayer for all the nations; his antagonist Rabbi Sonnenfeld, strait-laced in the narrowest Pharisaism; Miss Landau, who rivals Rabbi Kuk by directing a fashionable school where choreography and Talmudic practices are taught with equal enthusiasm: Miss Landau, such a zealot herself that, finding herself one day in the streets after Sabbath had begun, she confided her purse to the first non-Jew she met so that she might not carry money on the Lord’s day. . . .

Among the foreigners were many business men: American bankers, Dutch engineers, Belgian agricultural experts, German commercial travellers in machinery—speculating on the new Palestine, on the recuperated Promised Land.

And naturally conversation turns on Zionism. It has its passionate apostles and its detractors, and its neutrals who await its success to rally to it.

Often the discussions become warm: the atmosphere

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is distinctly heated: one hears winged words: "national home," "rebirth of Israel," "Hebraic Utopia," "Messianic madness."

The most curious thing is that it is the assimilated Jews who reproach the Zionists with their religious tepidity, while the Zionists accuse the assimilated of being denationalised and "slaves in the midst of freedom."

And I am struck by the fact that the Zionists—how have they managed it?—have completely lost the Jewish type, while the "assimilated," those precisely who assert that they are rock-bottom English or Americans or French, have kept the external characteristics of the Semite to an exaggerated degree.

From time to time the proprietor of the hotel sits down amidst his clients. He is an important person in the sacred assembly, who has installed a *bethamidrash* near his Kosher salon, has added a special *chotek*, and would not let a king's arrival turn him from his thrice daily eighteen prayers.

With him the discussion moves swiftly toward controversies and opinions whose subtlety I miss, but they are amusing, because they evoke in this modern setting and among these men of the world the dissensions of the Pharisees and Sadducees of the time of Herod. And what more unexpected than to hear a Yankee dandy tell, as he sips his whisky-and-soda, how he has burnt a candle before Rachel's tomb, or to see this elegant Roman consult his watch to see whether the hours that have passed since lunch will allow him to taste this cheese-biscuit, without making the "kid and its mother's milk" meet in his stomach?

And continually fresh arrivals pour into the hall, preceded by much-labelled baggage, or carrying in

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their arms palms or papyrus or else ritual lemons with pointed crowns, sent by the colonies to the exiles for the Feast of Tabernacles. And here are even some Parisian tourists: the brothers Tharaud, of whom the Zionists are both hopeful and fearful; André Lichtenberger, taking his observant, sympathetic curiosity throughout the East; and my colleague of *Le Temps*, Kharallah, whom a German phrenologist discovered to have a Hittite cranium. . . .

Dominating this cosmopolis with his tall figure and sweet, Christ-like expression, a man with long hair and the grey garments of a Quaker wanders around, a gourd and a Wandering Jew's staff in his hand. Some illuminated mystic, some prophetic Slav, doubtless, of whom there are so many born in Jerusalem!

But no; he is simply a buyer of land for the J.N.F. (Jewish National Fund), who with his long legs scours all Palestine from Dan to Beersheba, who knows each fellah hamlet and each Beduin tribe: the debts of the Effendis and the fields in fallow: who drinks with the Christian, eats with the Muslim, sleeps with the Druse: everywhere welcomed kindly because of his ascetic mildness and the music of his dollars.

I finished up Pesach week with the Chassidim, a sect whose sacred joy and solemn rejoicing is as fervent as any.

At the moment there was at Jerusalem one of their miracle-working rabbis, a Baalshem come with all his family from Galicia.

Here, truth to tell, he has neither the prestige nor the pomp he possessed there. It seems that holy Zion is not propitious to miracle-workers; their power sinks in the shadow of its walls. And so the Baal-

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shems only make pilgrimage to Palestine. But this one is compelled to settle down. He has been ruined by Bolshevism. He has come as a refugee to Jerusalem, and as the housing question is as acute there as anywhere else in the world, the poor rabbi, despite all his miracles, has had to lodge himself and his family modestly, in a hotel in the great Ghetto outside the walls, at *Measharim*, the Hundred Doors.

Quite exceptionally, the feminine members of his family were admitted, through lack of room elsewhere, to the feast-chamber, and I managed to edge into their midst.

We came to the end of the copious feast, and ate for the last time the *motzas*, the bread of affliction in memory of the Egyptian servitude, and drank many glasses of ritual wine in memory of the passage of the Red Sea and of the Liberation.

Naturally the design of this inn dining-room is very banal. On three long, narrow tables, raised, like those of the Last Supper, on trestles, there still remain scraps of victuals, among cups and candelabra of silver, vestiges of the Baalshem's great days, and brought from his "kingdom" in Galicia.

He himself is seated before a raised desk. He has a pale pontifical face, with horn-spectacles, haloed by a superb fur circlet above which rises a pointed velvet bonnet! A sumptuous mantle of black satin covers him. About him and at the other tables everyone has the same headdress of tufted fur, lower and less pointed, and all wear, floating over their shoulders, the Levite's cloth in satin or velvet in soft, warm, rich shades: amethyst, orange, copper, pitch.

The Baalshem has before him a very ancient book of magic whose pages he turns with waxen hands,

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chanting psalms and rocking himself backwards and forwards.

Already he has recounted the fabled story: the harsh servitude of the Hebrews in *Mizraim*, their departure, laden with riches, from the land of slavery; their passage on dry land across the Red Sea whose waters stood back like walls. And carried away by a rush of gratitude the old pontiff rises and empties his cup:

“ Thank the Lord our God, God of gods, Who has created the fruit of the vine. . . . ”

Upon which all the fur bonnets, all the caftans, respond, emptying their glasses with delirious gratitude:

“ Blessed be Thou, Lord, our God, King of kings, Who hast created the fruit of the vine. . . . ”

Assisted by his singers the Baalshem continues, more enthusiastic, more inflamed, to recite the immemorial strophes of the Bible, and the joyful canticle that Miriam, the holy dancer, sang while beating her timbrel:

Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously;
The horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea.

And all the Chassidim leap to their feet and beat out the rhythm with their hands:

Hallelujah ! Hallelujah !

They empty one more cup of wine—it is the Red Sea—then all, the Baalshem at their head, holding hands, dance around the main table, chanting in cadence:

We pass the Red Sea !
We pass the Red Sea !

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But their frenzy is not sufficiently intense. One of the psalmodists in a fine orange cloak leaps on to the table and, tapping the rhythm with his feet and snapping his fingers, his arms raised above his head in Bacchic gesture, he urges on the farandol which runs round the table and, on the way, laps up cups of red wine.

And the psalmodist becomes more and more exalted: now he dances, miming the Exodus and the swaying gait of the camels and the separation of the waters and their reflux upon the chariots, and the Hebrews running, running, their garments lifted up, to reach the other bank.

But do they run swiftly enough? . . . What if the Egyptians should catch them up? . . . And, untying the girdle, he lashes the pious dancers with it:

“Hasten! Hasten! Pass, pass the Red Sea! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! They have passed the Red Sea!”

And the psalmodist spins round like a globe, his orange cloak enwraps him like a tongue of fire, and the long tresses of his forehead zigzag in the air like lightning flashing from the cloud of his fur cap. . . .

Breathless he bends down, seizes a jar of wine, and, bending back, drinks: a biblical Silenus, his vine-leaf crown exchanged for a halo of sable fur. . . .

I am seated between the two daughters-in-law of the Baalshem, opposite his daughter, whose children have long been asleep with their elbows on the table, among the remains of bitter lettuce and unleavened bread. At the end of the table, burying herself in a corner, is the Rabbizin, an old-time Jewess with a satin perruque and cashmere shawl, who keeps her

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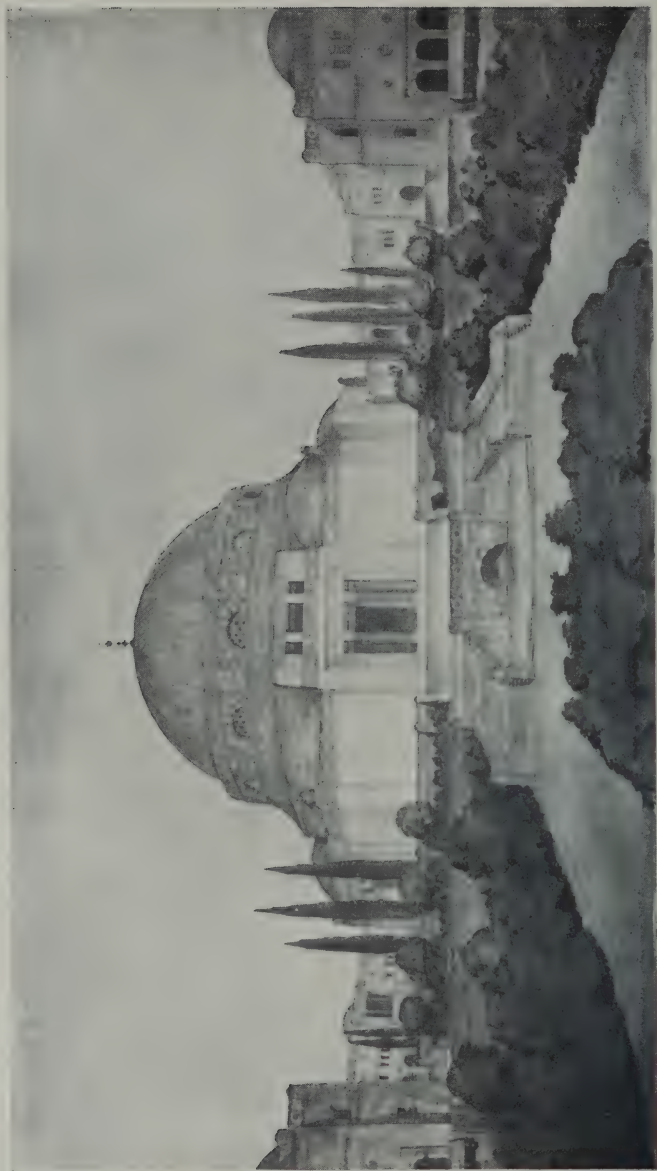
eyes obstinately lowered, embarrassed by the honour of this masculine proximity. . . .

The young women are more modern. They conceal their real unshaven hair beneath wigs, and their low-necked dresses are almost fashionable.

And while in the chamber the Chassidim continue to pass the Red Sea and glorify their deliverance, one of the Baalshem's daughters-in-law tells me how fine it was in Galicia, in her father-in-law's chateau, where they ate always on silver plates and where at Pesach they attacked a great silver basin full of *Tchaz*.

Now they were all but ruined by the Bolsheviks, who had burnt the property of the miraculous rabbi, and several factories that brought him dividends. Luckily he still had the shares of a fly-trap factory in America. He was going to set up a branch in Jerusalem. Thanks to God there were many flies in Palestine: surely her father-in-law's fly-catchers would do well !

And the young woman pronounced the words with a voice of such sincerity, with such a light in her eyes, that I was deeply touched, and I didn't find the story of this old, miraculous rabbi, forced to set up in Holy Zion a fly-catcher factory, at all laughable. . . .



DESIGN FOR THE CENTRAL HALL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM.

By Professor Geddes and Mr. Mears.

CHAPTER XV

THE ZIONIST EXECUTIVE

AFTER this week of troubled feasts, Jerusalem regained its peaceful aspect and recommenced its peaceful occupations.

I visited the *Zionist Committee*, now the *Palestine Zionist Executive*, which is installed in a large modern house on the Jaffa road, and has achieved governmental importance. It has its Ministry of Health, its Ministry of Agriculture, its Ministry of Education: its Treasury, directed by Heer Van Vriesland, a Gallicised Dutch nobleman: its Ministry of Immigration in the charge of Mr. Ussishkin of Russia, one of the first and most persistent "Lovers of Zion"; its Ministry of Foreign Affairs, held as in France by the President of the Executive, which, in the absence of Dr. Weizmann, is the office of Dr. Eder, of London, a man of calm and courteous authority.

It is characteristic that, whereas elsewhere, as soon as one talks of Zionism, people's imaginations become heated, and soar toward exalted dreams and gigantic expectations, here, in the heart of the Executive, there reigns the utmost sang-froid, an almost discouraging sobriety and exactitude of thought: one's interest and curiosity is answered by plans, bulletins, statistics. . . .

But indeed the Executive has little time for fine speeches. It is overloaded with work: at every moment the conversation is interrupted by the ringing of the telephone: "Excuse me! Hullo! . . . Ken! . . . Ken! . . . 'Tov! . . . tov! . . ."

And I am still amused to hear the language of the cloud on Sinai transmitted by electric wires. . . .

Or else it is a secretary, murmuring mysterious

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words or slipping papers beneath the hand that scrawls its signature from right to left in Kabbalistic letters. . . .

And here are a deputation of workmen from the new co-operative chocolate factory at Tel-Aviv. They have made their first product, and have come to offer it to the Zionist Executive, just as, once upon a time, Israel brought its first-fruits to the priests.

The chocolate, incidentally, is delicious. As they taste it, they say: "*Lechaim!*" (To your life), to which comes the response "*Lechaim!*" (To yours); then the deputation leaves, exchanging with the Executive the solemn pascal wish, which here, between these workers and their delegates, takes on the gravity of an oath:

Lashana habaah Beyerushalayim habnouya.

"You see," the Dutch Treasurer says, smiling, "we have our Temple already, since they bring us offerings of first-fruits!"

Dr. Luria himself, the Director of Education, is good enough to take me to the various schools. On the way, very soberly, he explains to me the immense educational work accomplished by the Zionist organisation during twenty years, which alone would suffice to convince one of the resurrection and future of the race.

"Not only must modern schools be created: a language must be created, too, or rather re-created, remoulded, adapted to science and progress. It was necessary to write, to translate a whole library of textbooks, to train men and women teachers, to exalt the national patriotism of the child, to combat the fanaticism of the 'orthodox' Jews, who would have

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preferred the *cheder* and the *yeshiba*, and the prejudice of parents who thought the assimilative schools more useful: the *Alliance Israélite*, the *Anglo-Jewish Association*, and, formerly, the *Hilfsverein*, where German propaganda had become so intensified that the youthful Zionists gave chase to their teachers and sacked the establishment !

“ At the present moment there are schools scattered throughout the towns and colonies of Erez-Israel, each one provided with an experimental garden cultivated by the children, and with a medical auxiliary comprising one resident nurse and one or two visiting doctors to fight the plagues of Palestinian childhood: trachoma, malaria, and vermin. We have also many kindergartens; two normal schools; one school of arts and crafts, the ‘ Bezael ’ in Jerusalem; a technical school at Haifa; a school for housekeepers at Safed; a school for girl farmers at Kinnereth; a musical conservatory at Tel-Aviv.

“ Every day the number of our pupils increases, but they are of very diverse elements. Look, here is the list.” And, opening a note-book:

“ Jerusalem, 4,561 pupils, of whom 1,953 are Ashkenazim, 1,610 Sephardim, 231 Yemenites, 86 Circassians, 227 Persians, 142 Moghrebins, 41 Babylonians, 8 Kurds. Naturally, they speak different jargons. We have to create unity by imposing on them the Hebrew language. Happily the national ideal has remained extraordinarily alive in these incredibly subdivided groups. I hope that in one or two generations there will come from our Hebrew schools men who, the genius of their race recuperated, will enrich humanity by their deeds and their thoughts.”

The motor pulls up before a superb house sur-

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rounded by a great garden, in one of the most prosperous quarters of the outer town. It is a boys' school, where I attended several lessons, without understanding much; but I admired the pedagogical methods employed, the quality of the teachers, and the general cleanliness of the establishment, which need not be envious of the best schools in Europe. In a school for little girls I listened to a French lesson given by Mlle. Ussishkin. In a co-educational secondary school small children and adolescents rivalled each other in ardour in mathematics; the geographical maps and botanical collections were admirable.

On the way back we met a group of children coming out of the *cheder*. They still have their long locks beneath the great black fur and striped caftan.

"The Talmudic school and the *melamed* are our great enemies. They hurl anathema at our science, and accuse us of profaning the sacred tongue, by applying it to modern life. . . . It is the fossilised Jerusalem, absorbed in the Book. But one day it also will rise again, and then it will bring us its peculiar resources and its dreaming language. . . . We must not expect to go too fast. . . . *Shalôm Yeladim!*" and with a pleasant smile the Director of Public Education greets the hope of the future Zion.

On the next day, Madame Sukin, the pretty directress of the *Beit Yeladim*, a long veil round her panama falling on her tussore dress, comes to take me to the kindergarten.

"There are twelve at Jerusalem, organised according to the caste and population of the different quarters. They are a heavy burden on the Zionist budget, for all are free of charge and all require large sums for their installation and equipment. But in Palestine

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they are indispensable, where the Jewish child knows neither his own tongue nor the most elementary rules of hygiene. Our young governesses are nearly all girls of good family, who hold it a duty to consecrate some years, between their High-School and marriage to the little ones. It is a Zionist noviciate, a sort of first-fruits offered at the altar of childhood.

We began by a "chic" kindergarten in the Zichron Moshe quarter, "the memory of Moses," to the memory of Moses Montefiore, a Zionist before the days of Zionism.

At the moment we entered twenty small creatures were doing rhythmic exercises in front of a pretty "gardener," in white gymnasts' costumes, and it was delightful to see them, throwing out their legs, balancing their bodies, running on the tips of their toes, marking time with their heels, beating out the rhythm with their small hands, and counting in Hebrew.

The room was prettily decorated with garlands of paper roses, and little banners in sky blue and white—the Zionists have Joan of Arc's colours—Heavenly Hope and Innocence.

"These are our pascal decorations, made by the children: and a generous mamma gave us, to mark the season—Easter for us is like Christmas for Christian children—this gigantic doll's house, in which living dolls can sit."

In another room, enamelled in white, more babies sit on little chairs in front of little tables, and near the door I notice shelves with glasses, tooth-brushes, and numbered towels.

"As soon as the children arrive, they have to clean their teeth. Their parents are not sufficiently careful about it, although here they come from the educated

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classes, and it is not necessary to wash them all over."

They are indeed delicious, these little men and women: dressed in tussore or embroidered linen in the latest French or English styles, but bearing, tiny and frail as they are, ponderous biblical names: Deborah, Abigail, Ezekiel, Isaiah. . . .

It is hard to believe that these are the children of Jerusalem, so much and so often decried. One thing alone distinguishes them from our own: the extreme variety of types, witnessing that they come of a wandering race. Unconsciously they call up before one's eyes and in one's mind an atmosphere of instability and inquietude: as one glances from one little head to another one forgets these pretty innocents in the thought of the great and sorrowful history whose memory they evoke.

"This young woman," says the Directoress, pointing to a pale beauty with long, curved lashes, "is a Sephardi from Spain; there is an Albino from Georgia; this snub nose and Tartar cheek-bones are from the Caucasus, that electric red hair from Tchecko-Slovakia . . . and, look, the little girl with peach-cheeks and nut-brown eyes—isn't she truly French?—she is called Mazeillia, because she was born at Marseilles."

And this whole little Babel is very busy folding paper mats, threading beads, putting together wooden mosaics, dressing dolls, and, in order to develop their practical abilities, making cradles, portmanteaux, chests-of-drawers, out of match-boxes.

"We let the children choose their own occupations: the main thing is that they should be occupied. Many of them have very marked preferences; little Isaac here, who will only make doll's dresses, ought certainly

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to be a ladies' tailor, while Shulamite will be a sculptress . . . look at her !”

And I bend over a potter's outfit spread out before the tiny artist, who is modelling the fruits on a dish of sacrificial offerings.

“ The other day,” the Directress tells me, “ I talked of the Exodus from Egypt. Shulamite immediately sculptured camels and a Pharaoh with a pointed hat who was running after the Hebrews with a big stick.

“ Here,” continues the Directress, “ we have a double rôle: both pedagogical and patriotic. We have to awaken national patriotism in the child and give him a language. In other kindergartens the babies at least bring with them their mother-tongue: here they can't understand one another, so we have to teach them Hebrew. And half our efforts rebound back to their parents, to whom they return to teach Hebrew with their games and songs. And thus are justified David's words: ‘ Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast Thou established strength.’ ”

In a second class older kiddies are absorbedly slashing note-books with coloured chalks.

“ They are recounting their walk yesterday: we train them to express themselves pictorially, no matter how crudely. . . . Look ! this little girl has drawn a rose because she was most struck by a rosebud. This other girl saw nothing but this dog, or, at any rate this animal which represents one, and this little fellow wanted me to write under his medley of colours—wouldn't you think it an Impressionist landscape ?—‘ Sunset on the Mountains of Ephraim.’ ”

“ And now,” says Madame Sukin, “ the children are going to act a musical play: *Shushannah*, ‘ the wild rose,’ which you call Sleeping Beauty.”

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And gathered in the great hall, all the children, representing rose-bushes, form a circle around a little girl covered in golden gauze and sitting on a stool, all singing:

Shushannah was a lovely girl. . . .

And now comes the witch, dressed as a Beduin sorceress naturally: and the rose-bushes warn her in vain:

Take care, Shushannah, take care, Shushannah !
Thou wilt sleep mia'schanna, mia'schanna !
(A hundred years, a hundred years !)

The spell is cast over her, the lovely rose sleeps, and the rose-bushes draw near, draw nearer, lifting their arms above their heads like branches. . . . Fortunately here is the King's son—what a pretty boy beneath his crown of gold paper ! He pushes aside the rose-bushes and runs straight to the rose, singing, like Solomon to his Shulamite:

How fair is thy love,
My sister, my spouse !

while all the rose-bushes leap for joy and sing as they draw back:

O Shushannah ! Hosannah ! Hosannah !

"It's charming," I exclaimed with ravishment: and I had indeed not expected to hear these mites act a Hans Andersen fable in the language of the Psalms !

"It is almost symbolic," responds the pensive Directress. "Our language, too, was a Sleeping Beauty; it has been awakened by the Zionists' love for it. . . ."

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Very different is the kindergarten of *Nachala-Zion*, the "inheritance of Zion": a poor inheritance where families of small shopkeepers from Bessarabia and the Ukraine dwell in poverty. Having themselves experienced the miseries of the Russian Ghetto, their dream is that their children may know the free life of peasant farmers: and so the little people are trained here to prepare the vegetables for their soup, draw water, dig the garden, feed the poultry, milk the goats, singing childish Hebrew pastorals.

Each child has pinned to its pinafore a handkerchief, whose uses it learns with some difficulty; and, naturally, in every room there is the cupboard with its tooth-brushes, soap, and towels: very necessary here, I'm afraid.

Another *Beit Yeladim*, in the old city, near the Haram-Es-Sherif and the Wailing Wall, in the pretty sloping street of ancient, friendly arcades.

It is a charming, most picturesque Arab house, with its stairways, terraces, colonnade; its hanging garden, and all its wild gardens of poppies and mignonette which spread over the neighbouring roofs, sprouting among the ancient stone slabs of the cupolas.

The schoolrooms, whitewashed and very clean, with Lilliput furniture and work-baskets hung along the walls, have an almost modern look, which takes me somewhat aback.

But the children are true products of their decrepit quarter, despite the handkerchief pinned to their shoulders: and mignonette flowers, too, on their small heads—poor, faded mignonette: their rachitic legs are swathed in baggy breeches: dusty cloaks fall on short vests of worn velvet: their stockings are tumble-

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down and wrinkled, or absent: but there is always, hung round the neck or sown into the *tarbush*, some metal locket enclosing the *Shema Israel*, some cornelian talisman: and if you are a girl you have also copper bracelets that glisten as if they were gold, and grandmother-earrings that tear your ears . . . but make you so proud!

And even the work-baskets that took me aback, how truly they reveal the soul of this Jewish quarter! Here, in clay, are *menorahs*, candles for *Yom Kippur*, Wailing Walls and, made with the help of green silk paper, Tabernacles for the festival and the palm-tree of *Mizraim*.

In a corner, in a tray, is a sheet of paper pierced through in every direction: round holes, square holes, star-shaped holes. . . .

"The firmament?"

"No," says the laughing supervisor, an intelligent, much-alive lady with shepherdess locks: "No, it is the town of Jerusalem—at least, that is what little Rachel here will have."

"Seen from up here it is absolutely correct. It is the best map of Jerusalem possible, this slit-up sheet of paper," I said as I looked out of the window at the fantastic disorder, the unbelievable entanglement of cupolas of every shape and size, of terraced roofs, and empty spaces and bastions, domes, minarets, trees growing at all angles. . . .

A little *tarbush*-wearer presses upon us with pride an album wherein he has embroidered in letters of alternate colour the solemn, square letters.

"That spells Yerushalayim!—the magic word by which they learn how to write. Yerushalayim, how they love that name! How proud they are of belonging

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to it! How splendidly they see it! In this poor population national sentiment is intense. None of them would leave these miserable tenements for a fine house outside the ramparts, because outside it is no longer the City of David. And in truth they live *on* David's City, for most of these children's parents are Moghrebs, stuck fast to the *Kotel Ma'arabi*—you have seen their kennels—who follow the profession of holy mendicity. We have, as well, a few Bokharans, Persians, Babylonians: travelling merchants and pedlars. . . . Unhappily they have no notion of hygiene, and nearly all the children suffer from ophthalmia: look at this pretty little person from Teheran, already blind: and as to sores, and all that they provide with board and lodging in their hair and on their bodies . . . ! But, Madame, though they are poor, lousy, and badly dressed, they can sing and dance and act plays with the best."

And the supervisor leads me to a great, light room, open on to the pretty sloping street, and distributes among the favoured twopenny-halfpenny tambourines and rattles, and then she sits down to an old piano, and the children act "Rebecca and Eliezer": a little Babylonian holds out her amphora with exquisite Oriental grace to the servant of Abraham, who jingles bracelets brought as nuptial gifts, while the other children, standing or kneeling, mutter and complain like camels. . . .

Then it is "David the Shepherd," with words and music composed by Mademoiselle M. herself.

A little Moghrebi with houri-eyes throws a shepherd's mantle over his shoulder—it was a bath-towel—and with first an imaginary harp, then a flute, in his hands, he reclines against a boulder-chair, while his

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flock spreads out about him, and the choir chants in Hebrew:

Little David made a harp,
David the shepherd with beautiful eyes.
David played, he played gently,
And the flock went down on their knees.
Fadidoda, Fadidoda, O sweet harping !

David made a flute as well,
David the shepherd with beautiful eyes.
David played his flute so well
That the flock leapt to their feet.
Tirilili ! Tirilili, O most pretty flute:
We also leap, we leap with joy.

And all these poor children dance in cadence with their orchestra. They are David's flock. They have forgotten their ills.

But the kindergarten I liked best was in the Jewish village of Shiloah: a village clinging like a bird's nest to the steep face of a rocky mountain, the Hill of Offence where Solomon, weary of the magnificence of the Temple, went to sacrifice to the Astartes of his alien wives in the High Places, beneath aromatic trees.

Here dwell the Yemenites, the diminutive people I had already encountered in the colonies, who came here, thirty years ago, from the depths of Arabia's mysterious towns: Sanaa, Hadja-Hadjour, Amzân. . . . Completely assimilated to the Arabs, they are in some sort the proletariat of Judaism, employed upon the humblest tasks in Jerusalem—cleaning houses, emptying sewage, removing the dead: each morning coming down from their hill after the morning prayer, crossing Kidron and the Valley of Hinnom, entering by the

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Moghrebi gate—and in the evening climbing back to their rock to purify themselves in the ritual bath, and recite their Angelus.

Although very orthodox, they have allowed the Zionists to give them a *Beth Ganim*, but only for the girls: the boys, almost as soon as they can walk, are sent to the *Chaham*, who in a sort of grotto expounds the sacred books.

And the girls' school, too, is a poor little thing, that we reached after a tiring climb up a goat-track path of sharp-pointed stones, with houses like stone cubes spread along it, here and there enlivened by a fig-tree, vine, or grenadine growing in two inches of soil, or even—the height of luxury—a petrol-can set up above the portico, overflowing with fragrant creepers.

The school was a vaulted chamber half cut out of the solid rock, with a window looking sheer down on to the valley: a place akin to both crypt and observatory, wherein a dozen little Yemenites were gravely busy with the construction of the walls of Jerusalem, the threading of beads, and the counting of matches.

Most of the little girls were pretty: but so frail, so slight, with such great black eyes devouring their small pointed faces, and such long, thin necks, that they seem like newly hatched birds fallen too soon from their nests.

And however fragile and small, they all wear amber necklets with beads as big as quinces, and heavy earrings which darken yet further their sombre colour, and give them the look of the very old. . . .

At a sign from the teacher, all these fallen nestlings, all these little old women, tidy their beads and matches and, radiant with joy, take into their arms poor, shabby dolls from a cupboard in the wall.

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"They are the cast-offs of the rich kindergartens," says the smiling "gardener."

But, without doubt, they think them superb, for they cradle them tenderly, murmuring nursery rhymes.

Li Bouba ! Li Bouba !
(I've got a doll ! I've got a doll !)

Seated on the window-seat I listen to them and survey the landscape.

In front, at a great height, touching the clouds, is a corner of the grey bastions. On the other side, lower down, and separated from Jerusalem by the Valley of Hinnom, the Hill of Evil Counsel, where the ruin of the Nazarene was bruited in Caiphas' country-house; then Hakel-Dama, the "field of blood," bought with the thirty silver pieces, where my nurse once showed me the tree whereon the remorseful Iscariot hanged himself.

Leaning out, I could see in the abyss the dry bed of the Kedron that carried away the fragments of the Baals and Astartes that Israel, after each repentance, threw down from the voluptuous High Places. It debouches from the Valley of Jehoshaphat, the biblical Gehenna, and flows on to the Bir-Ayub (the wells of Job), in whose depths, my father once told me, the priests hid the oil for the sacred fire before the first Babylonian captivity. To the right, on a rocky islet, stands a venerable mulberry-tree, to whose shade King Manasseh came to watch the Prophet Isaiah sawn in two with a wooden saw—how I shivered as a child when I passed that spot!—and all around, sloping down to the Kidron and up to the city, the "King's Garden," the "closed garden," where once there grew lover's bouquets for the daughters of Jerusalem.

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And to-day it is still the great kitchen-market where the fellahin women with the starry headdress—surely they are the descendants of the “alien women” who worshipped Ashtaroah in the fragrant groves—still cultivate mint and thyme, which they carry up to sell in the greengrocers’ market, in baskets on their heads.

Further off and higher up, a white minaret marks the spring of Shiloah, whose waters, still esteemed, flow with the same slowness as in the age of the Mes-sianic prophet:

“Forasmuch as this people hath refused the waters of Shiloah that go softly . . . now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the River.”

Behind me the little Yemenite girls continue the Hebrew cradle-song, hugging their mutilated dolls.

A mild, crypt-like light bathes this kindergarten clinging to the face of the Hill of Offence. And the singing of these children—maybe descendants, long fugitive in Arabia, of the Queen of Sheba or the Ten Lost Tribes—takes on a profound, complex, mysterious significance as they chant, overlooking the most pathetic countryside in the world, and in the language of the Song of Songs and Isaiah:

Li Bouba ! Li Bouba !
(I’ve got a doll ! I’ve got a doll !)

In the afternoon I visited a Zionist art exhibition in a great building whose ground floor is occupied by the Hebrew daily *Doar Hayom*, and the second story by Doctor Eder, president, by the way, of the very modern Jerusalem Psycho-Analytical Society.

On the walls are pictures and drawings that would do honour to any provincial gallery. But, unhappily,

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I could read neither the catalogue nor the author's names, both written in Hebrew.

A few sculptures, not so successful, but compensated for by charming decorative craftsmanship of Judæan *motifs* : *torahs* in *repoussé* silver work; palms in colour tints; encrusted *mezuzah* boxes, chiselled cherubims; the Egyptian Exodus, a handsome Jewish Bacchus drunk with the fruit of the vine, dancing maidens carried off by Benjamites. Then painted parasols, embroidered cloths, children's bonnets, where "Hebraic" ornament advantageously replaces "greek" and arabesque.

Very witty and very plastic, although done in bits of rag, is a complete series of caricatures of Jewish types and their odd rig-outs, treated with that gift of self-mockery which is one of Israel's superiorities.

All the exhibitors, I am informed, were taught in the Fine Arts school, the Bezalel, in Jerusalem. And when one remembers that the school has only been in existence for a few years, and that most of the pupils have never visited a first-class museum, one is astonished at the results, which prove once again the homogeneity and tenacity of the Zionist effort to develop the national genius.

After the departure of the crowd I talked with Dr. Eder, in his office, whose window looks over a familiar countryside: the marsh of Mamilla, its cupolaed well, and, dispersed and scattered in every direction even more thoroughly than the Chosen People itself, the tombs of this Muslim cemetery.

Often in my childhood I came to wander in this wild, enchanted garden, and gathered the anemones and adonis that weave from tomb to tomb their tapestries of prayers. Or I went to sit higher up, in my "field

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of enchanted stones," to look at the fantastic cemetery, spreading almost to the grey ramparts. Here Sennacherib pitched his camp when he came to besiege Jerusalem; from this spot he sent forth his heralds to insult the God of Israel in "the speech of the Jews" in the hearing of the people watching from the walls. I had often amused myself by picturing the multitude of tents of the Assyrian, pitched on the plain of tombs, and yonder, between the battlements, the trembling city listening to the promises and threats of the blasphemers.

To-day I should not find it easy to wander in the lovely graveyard field. A wall surrounds it and only the corpse—head first—and its mourners may enter.

"What a pity—the wall is hideous! It disfigures the countryside and imprisons the dead. It is the first time that I have seen an Arab cemetery closed in. In my day the dead of Islam participated in life, communicating with the passer-by. Has it, too, become fanatical?"

Dr. Eder gave a melancholy smile:

"Everyone in Palestine now likes to think in extremes. Why is this cemetery and the adjoining land walled in? . . . Because we wanted to buy an adjacent plot in order to construct a square, and a good road to our western suburbs, from which we are absolutely cut off. It was an abandoned plot of land, and hence not at all dear: this wall strangely increases its value. If we had enough money it would fall. It will fall, doubtless, some day. But land in Jerusalem has reached fabulous prices. On the Jaffa road the square yard is worth as much as in the Paris boulevards or in the city of London. All that is an

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enormous hindrance to our extension, which would have been twice as great with a favourable economic situation. The collapse of Russia has nearly ruined us. I have asked myself by what miracle we even continue to exist. The Russian Zionists, once so munificent, are unable to give us any aid now: we depend almost entirely on America to keep going. We are going through a tragic moment. Our will, our idealism, will triumph. It is impossible that our national hope should not be realised. Zionism to-day is for Jews a question of life and death: if it goes under, Judaism will have been."

Then Dr. Eder tells me of Dr. Weizmann, as much a man of action as of imagination. Professor of Chemistry at Manchester, he rendered very great assistance to the British Admiralty in the War by various inventions. It was to thank him that Balfour showed him so much sympathy, and in 1917 published the Declaration in favour of the National Home which lit up indescribable enthusiasm throughout the Jewish world. It was Dr. Weizmann, too, who established the economic bases of Zionism.

While we were thus talking my eyes were magnetically attracted by the portrait of Herzl that dominated us by the impressive beauty of its Assyrian face and the elegance of its proportions, and I thought of what the Bible says of Saul: "There was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he": standing upright, his hand resting on a balustrade, he seems to seek Jerusalem with the gentle, ardent light in his eyes.

"He saw it, indeed," said Dr. Eder. "This photograph was taken after a very stormy congress where, accused of treason to Zion, because in despair, and for a

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moment, he had thought of some other refuge than Erez-Israel, he rose up, very pale and, turning toward the City of David, took the oath of the Babylonian exiles: 'If ever I forget thee, O Jersusalem!' These, too, were almost his last words in public. He died soon after, having indeed given his life for the return of his brethren to their fatherland. . . . Yes, I knew him: he was a wonderful man; a poet too, endowed with the eloquence and the soul of a prophet. Handsome, rich, prosperous, he had never suffered from anti-Semitism, and hardly knew he was a Jew until the day when he learnt of the persecution and moral wretchedness of his people. He was the Moses, if not the Messiah, of Zionism.

"Did he come to Palestine?"

"Yes, but he only stayed a few days, the time necessary to visit certain colonies and plant a tree in a field near Mozza that the National Fund had recently purchased."

"A tree?"

"Yes, a cypress. Our great men plant cypresses in the same way as yours lay the first stone. Herzl planted a tree of life in the land of Israel. It was in 1899. Soon after, this field, which had received his name, became a place of pilgrimage for Zionists. Then, in the War, Djemal Pasha had the 'tree of the Jew,' *sadgre gahoud*, which was already vigorous and upspringing, cut down. But he omitted to have it burnt. The Jews went out to find it. It is now in the Natural History Museum.

"In a hundred years, in fifty years, people will go and cut off little bits as relics. And who knows?—everything is possible in Jerusalem—legend will relate that a second Messiah, son of David, died on this tree

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of life for the salvation of Israel. There will be one more God and one more religion."

"I hope not," said Dr. Eder, with his melancholy smile. "I assure you we have enough of that sort of religion at Jerusalem."

CHAPTER XVI

ELIEZER-BEN-JEHUDA

ANOTHER modern quarter behind the "Russian buildings," that little Slav city built by the Romanoffs to facilitate pilgrimage and fortify the throne of the Czars.

It used to be a great mysterious enclosure, pierced by a single low wicket-gate which could be passed only with difficulty. As a child, and being of the neighbourhood and knowing the door-keeper, I often wandered in. I liked the austerity of the vast caravanserai, with its cloistral silence and the echo of its stone pavements; the basilica with its five golden bulbs and melancholy hymns, chanted by these strange men of the North.

In the middle of the concession, surrounded by a wrought-iron railing, there used to be a circular garden where bees hummed about purple, heavy-scented sage bushes.

Oh, the desolation of the present Russian buildings! They have been devastated and profaned like the throne of the Czars. The walls have been cast down, the gold taken from the domes, and a public right-of-way established through the cloistered city: and I could scarcely rediscover the site of the perfumed garden where once a little girl came to read adventure stories, listening unheeding to the rending *gospodi pomeli* of the basilica.

Yes, a whole modern quarter has sprung up behind, dominated by a pretentious new church, with its portal flanked by two lions which—ferocious lambs of Christ—support a cross with their paws. It is a new Ethiopian church, whose Abyssinian priests can be seen wandering through the city, as thin and skinny as

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wading marsh-birds, and wearing on their heads curious cubes of greenish crêpe. Immediately opposite the pompous monument, and shrinking from its neighbourhood, is a little stone house whose knocker I lift.

A narrow, winding stair, then a long, cloistral room, furnished with an immense table packed with open, unintelligible volumes.

And beyond it, upright, but scarcely taller, is a man of indefinable age, so thinned and immaterial that one would take him to be a spirit floating over his books.

It is Eliezer-ben-Yehuda, the restorer of Hebrew: its magician and alchemist, who, in a modern crucible, has remoulded, without altering, the substance of the ancient, consecrated tongue.

For thirty years he accomplished, alone and without disciples or secretaries, the work of our forty Academicians, working on a colossal dictionary, an encyclopædia—the first to exist—that should for ever fix the speech of the new Jewish nation.

“It would be impossible for me to have an assistant, I myself have no small trouble to keep track of everything: look what I have to consult for every word, for every root!”

And with a sweep of his arm he pointed out to me manuscripts and books, Aramaic, Syriac, Chaldæan, Ethiopian, Arab.

“If the Lord lets me live, I hope to complete my task. Sixteen volumes are finished: four more remain. . . . I am seventy-five, and it can be said of me as of Moses: ‘His eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.’ . . . But, more fortunate than he, I have entered into the Promised Land. I have possessed my inheritance: I have seen my dream realised

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beyond my wildest hopes. In less than forty years a dead language has been resuscitated ! In the history of humanity you will not find another such miracle ! At this moment thousands of Jews in Russia and America speak and write Hebrew fluently: and here, in Palestine, it is an official language. The Government employees, Arab and English, learn it: our lawyers plead in Hebrew in British courts. A language: we have our language ! It is the Temple of Jerusalem rebuilt in the spirit; the Empire of David restored in our speech: it is all the Scattered of Israel brought back towards the holy precincts of the Jewish tongue. . . . No, no, I had indeed not dared to hope for this result when, a lover of Zion's speech, I came here from Moscow, forty-five years ago, to start a Hebrew newspaper. . . . But I have kept you standing up. . . . I myself can't work in any other way, because I have continually to walk round my table. . . ."

And Ben-Jehuda led me into a little Oriental room, decorated with an impressive bust of himself, in his familiar attitude, with his eyes lowered to his books.

Thus withdrawn into himself, with his mystic, triangular face, he seems like a Gothic saint, without the halo. He reminds me, too, of Huysmans, the author of "La Cathedrale," who loved to drink in the fragrance of the Bible through the splendour of the Catholic psalms.

"It is the work of a young Zionist sculptor," said the savant, following my glance: "a young man born and bred in Jerusalem, and who has spoken only Hebrew. . . . Yes, it's finely sensitive, isn't it? A Jewish sensitiveness. If only the Jews could understand what they have to gain by remaining Jews ! . . . Unhappily, this young artist wanted to go to Europe.

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I think he is in Paris. If only he doesn't lose his Jewish inspiration there !”

Madame Ben-Jehuda joined us. Still young beneath her snowy, waving hair, her firm, regular traits and fine eyes remind one of the heroic women of the Old Testament: Jael, Deborah, Judith. . . .

“ It is to her,” said the savant, “ to her courage and will and enthusiasm, that I owe it that I have been able to pursue my aim. Without her I should have succumbed under the weight of anathemas, curses, slanders without end flung at me by the modern Pharisees. For, however paradoxical it may seem, it was these Pharisees who were most opposed to the rebirth of our language. They prayed in Hebrew, but spoke in a hideous jargon, and cried sacrilege at the vulgarisation of the sacred tongue. When my eldest son was born and I jumped him on my knees singing him Hebrew rhymes, I was taken for a madman; and when I made my wife speak the speech of Judæa—poor thing, she didn't know a word when she came—we were ridiculed: ‘ The Ben-Jehuda family holds dialogues with the dead; soon it will take to prophecy. . . . ’ ”

“ And I was excommunicated,” added Madame Ben-Jehuda, laughingly, “ because I wore a hat: it is a sin for women to wear hats, and for men to go without; and on Sabbath I sheltered from the sun beneath a parasol. I was indifferent to that sort of thing: the Judaism I loved never had anything in common with such bigotry. But it was less amusing when, as I went to market, I was hustled, spat upon, and refused food and credit. I came home weeping, and thenceforth went to Muslim and Christian shops. As for the butcher, so much the worse ! We ate *trefer*, the Impure,

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while we spoke the Pure language. But we had very hard times, for as my husband's readers diminished, our family increased. There were days when I had no bread to give them."

"Yes, we had black hours," the savant admitted "I wanted to renounce the struggle and give up my paper. . . . But then we found some encouragement, some friends. The first colonies were founded. In them feeling was more liberal, and patriotism more highly developed. The colonists understood the immense significance of the renascence of our ancient language for the conception of a homeland. They congratulated me, asked me for books and lectures, clamoured for Hebrew teachers. Little by little they gave up the Talmudic and foreign schools. Poets and writers sprang, all at once, from the soil. It was like the awakening from prolonged lethargy. At the four corners of the earth Hebrew began to be spoken; here, in Judæa, it was understood without having been learnt. And this speech of our forefathers influenced our conscience and characteristics and tastes. The Jew who spoke Hebrew was no longer like the Jew who used it only for his prayers. Little by little the race of commerce and unsettled life turned towards the ancient stability of agriculture and manual labour. Perhaps, in reality, it had always yearned for it. For centuries throughout Europe manual labour was forbidden it. The Middle Ages excluded Jews from the crafts. They could not be smiths, nor carpenters, nor even shoemakers like Hans Sachs. They had to be either Shylock or Ahasuerus. And then Israel, like the fox and the sour grapes in the fable, despised what it could not have. It turned away from muscular effort. It became an atrophied race. And taking

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refuge in the study of the Book, it took too literally the horrible Mosaic threats. Its fear of calamities brought them on. We had become pusillanimous and effete, 'a matter of scorn to our enemies.' But the Hebrew language will give us back the assurance and courage of our ancestors. Already we have our 'national home' and a Jew as High Commissioner. Soon we shall have our nationality. The Jew will be a Palestinian subject, until he becomes a Jew, pure and simple. But for that he must readopt his ancient Hebrew name, which is that by which the Holy of Israel will call us up on the day of resurrection. He must repudiate the German surnames, which sparkle with precious stones and are fragrant with flowers, without in any way disguising the misery of the *galut*. The Jew must call himself courageously Ben-Moses or Ben-Aron or Ben-Levy, and when he has learnt to bear his name with assurance and dignity, no one will think it ridiculous. When I came here I changed my name. I wanted to be a son of Judah and of Judæa. I was ashamed to call myself, in the land of my forefathers, 'Perlmann,' like a freed slave."*

To-day, the Sabbath day, Madame Ben-Jehuda takes me to the great Ghetto beyond the city walls, Miashorim, the Hundred Doors, where I had already been to see the *Baalshem* and his acolytes dance across the Red Sea. But it was evening then, and I had not realised the extent of this new Thebes, which covers a large area to the north-west of Jerusalem, stretching from the new English quarter and the colony of American Adventists right to the tombs of the Kings and the Sachem road.

* Eliezer Ben-Jehuda died last year. His Dictionary is being completed.

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Composed of a multitude of heterogeneous conglomerations, great quadrilaterals and long sheds built right on the stony ground without order or planning or any regard for comfort or prettiness, and without a trace of verdure—for did not Israel adore Astarte beneath green trees?—the Jewish town is divided into numerous diminutive national quarters. There dwell representatives of the Diaspora from every part of Central and Eastern Europe: from Russia, Poland, Roumania, Hungarian Transylvania, grouped according to the cities of their origin, Odessa, Kieff, Moscow, Lemberg, Warsaw, Vilna, that Lithuanian Jerusalem.

Faithful to their ancient costume—caftan and fur hat—they are all ultra-orthodox living on the *Haluka*, that gigantic charity replenished from all over the world, for which the humblest orthodox family sets aside every Friday evening, at the lighting of the Sabbath lamp, a dole for “Yerushalayim.”

Distributed through a committee to the Palestine Jews, the *Haluka* provided maintenance in the historic fatherland for a fragment of the Chosen People, a pious army which, by its prayers, should accelerate the realisation of the Messianic promises and the redemption of the whole nation.

This vast mystical colony—very prolific in children—in effect takes the place of the Levites. Its members are diversely occupied: some consecrate themselves to the study of the law; others recite *Kinot*, Prayers for Zion, at the Weeping Wall, see to the upkeep of ritual lamps, and recite the *Kaddish* for the dead who lie in strange lands; others, again, undertake pilgrimages to the tombs of sainted rabbis and there make libations of oil and burn garments as sacrificial offerings, at Tiberias, at the sepulchres of Rabbi Ramban

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(Maimonides), Rabbi Meïr, and Rabbi Akiba, but above all in Upper Galilee, where, with his sons and his thirty disciples, there sleeps Simeon Ben-Yohai, the presumed author of the Book of Splendour. . . .

But since the rise of Zionism the *Haluka* feeds the Flock of Piety more parsimoniously. The new national hope has diverted the golden streams towards the agricultural colonies. Soon they will have left the bigots altogether dry, and it is this financial rivalry, rather than religious scruple, that rouses the anger of Pharisees and Sadducees against Zionists and Chalutzim.

And among themselves they are divided by ritualist quarrels and Talmudic disputations. Each sect has its special way of swaying, or of pronouncing Hebrew, or of expounding a particular text: each one has its own synagogue, its own schools, its own pool of purification, and its own sacrificial offerings. They agree only in hurling anathema at those who do not confine themselves to the most paltry devotional exercises and who do not, as they themselves do, observe with fanaticism the Sabbath regulations, consisting of 248 positive and 365 negative prescriptions. And their fanaticism is so primitive that their exact number has never been known: for the taking of a census, as in King David's time, is considered a sin: and when they gather for prayer they say in order to count the ten necessary participants: "Not one," "Not two," "Not three," etc. . . .

From a *Bethamidrash* there appeared a congregation of the faithful. They walk in two well-separated files: the men on one side of the road, the women on the other. They walk slowly, solemnly, their arms hanging loose, slouching along. It is sinful for a man to walk alongside his wife. One understands how

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it must scandalise them to see the Chalutzim march by cavalierly, men and women arm in arm. And it is a sin to carry anything at all! If you have a cold, you must tie a handkerchief round your neck: you must not take snuff nor smoke; not strike a match; and, unless you are crippled, you must not use a walking-stick.

“Look at that signpost; it is the *tchum*. It is forbidden to go beyond it, for any walk would be a labour, and would infringe the Sabbath rest. But these laws, made in the Ghetto, were probably meant to ensure safety—it was dangerous to wander from it—or laid down in that peculiar Jewish spirit that has always despised or held sinful whatever the *goyim* would not permit the Israelites to do. We had no right to walk outside the Ghetto, drink in fresh air, or delight in Nature: and, well, then, we didn't want to: we preferred to remain in our diseased kennels, bent over the *siddur*. . . . But look at the colonies: there they go out far and wide. They ride in carriages or sail in boats: and the young man whose betrothed is in another colony jumps on horseback on the Sabbath morning to gallop to meet her.

“When bigotry no longer supplies them with a livelihood, these mumblers will exchange the caftan for the Chalutz breeches: in a generation or two all these ‘fur bonnets’ will be peasants. They have made me suffer enough! But now, see, I have a hat on my head, an umbrella and a handbag, and yet they have greeted me with ‘Gut Yomtof!’”

We had come to the end of the long sheds and unattractive quadrilaterals. The Jewish town still stretched away, but it had now a different look. Isolated houses—still without any common planning

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—stood here and there in bizarre Oriental architecture, half Moorish, half Persian, some surrounded by gardens, with an abandoned, overgrown state that contrasted with the complex style and rare materials of the buildings.

“It is now the Bokharan quarter,” Madame Ben-Jehuda explains. “You have heard of these Jews who look like Chinese, and speak a medley of ancient Persian and modern Turkish and Tartar. They specialise chiefly in trade in Astrakhan fur and precious stones. Some had grown so rich that they ate only off golden vessels, and prayed only in their private synagogues, which were marvellously furnished. They are orthodox in their own way: for example, in their houses they always leave one bit unfinished—a balcony without a rail, a courtyard without paving stones, a portal without pediment—because it would be sinful to dwell in a completed house while the Lord is homeless: and when they take possession of their houses they say: ‘We will finish it next year, when Yerushalaim shall have been restored.’”

“Poor fellows: to-day it isn’t necessary to search for the missing bit. See how the houses are dilapidated! The war ruined the Bokharans. Many died of illness or want. Many have gone away. Those who remain have become antiquaries—you have seen them at the Jaffa gate—selling their treasures, and letting out their houses to the Zionists.”

And now, in a little square, there rises before us a real palace in the lovely Jerusalem stone which takes rose tints at dawn, grey at noon, mauve in the evening, and which, when worked up and polished, has the sumptuousness of pale porphyry. Hundreds of children come out of it on to golden balconies, running

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between colonnades, sliding down the balustrade of a majestic, doubled staircase.

"An orphanage. . . . Well housed, don't you think so? It is the palace that the richest Bokharan built for himself and his numerous family. He is very pleased to have been able to let it to the Zionist Executive. He himself lives next door: if you would care to look in. . . ."

And we entered a house of good appearance with a great salon furnished with banal tinsel and mother-of-pearl Damascus armchairs round the walls, but having in the middle a Bokhara carpet worth more than the price of a great castle. . . .

On one of these glittering chairs sits the master of the house, dressed magnificently in a bizarre-patterned silk robe and a tall astrakhan bonnet. He has veiled eyes and a copper tint, Tartar cheekbones, and that extremely dignified, malign look of Mongol potentates.

By his side is a charming vision, a little golden-capped satrap seated on a pile of cushions, whom a diminutive Persian girl, enveloped in filmy gauzes caught up with brooches, and crouching in a delightful pose of humility, feeds from a vermilion vessel of such archaic type that one thinks of the utensils of the Temple that Nebuchadnezzar carried off to his palace in Babylon.

"They are the wife and child of one of his sons who died, totally ruined, in Turkestan. She possessed the most beautiful jewels in the world, which she had to sell to pay her way here: she has nothing left, but her little one will still eat off precious plate, and on Sabbath wear his golden cap. As for the grandfather he was many times a multi-millionaire."

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"Yes, yes," King Ahasuerus, who has understood the last word, nods with his astrakhan bonnet: and he continues in his Persian-cum-Tartar language, translated by my companion:

"Yes, there we possessed vast wealth. But we were not happy. We were exiles, and on any day we were liable to have all our goods confiscated by a single edict. We were not allowed to build houses, and all of us, rich and poor, had to wear the infamous yellow streak on our backs. And we were not allowed to emigrate, save with empty hands. But in 1905 the first Russian revolution liberated us. The Emir of Bokhara, whom we had helped financially, gave us citizen rights and permission to build. I built forty-two factories; but I didn't want to build my house there. I kept it for Erez-Israel, whither I came to live ten years ago. And Adonai has recompensed us, since here every acre is worth gold, while of all the riches we had there, nothing, nothing is left. . . ."

During this conversation the room had become animated. At the far end, sorceresses in robes of kabalistic design; nearer, the younger generation in horrible European fashions, but softened—because it is Sabbath—by pretty muslins, fastened with brooches round the bust and shoulders: then, round me, in impeccable morning dress, and ties, handkerchiefs, and socks in carefully chosen silks, four young men in straw hats.

They speak English, French, and German equally well, since, as merchants in astrakhan and in diamonds, they had visited the capitals of the world and, as they told me, found much amusement therein. . . . The war surprised them in Russia. Their wealth exempted them from the Tsarist army, but not from the net of

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the Bolsheviks. In the Red Army one was an interpreter, one a director of the censorship, one an ambulance man, and the fourth an infantryman. All four, after different periods of service, succeeded in escaping from Russia, and came to rejoin their father, after suffering unheard-of privations and wandering over the earth.

"But here, after such a violent life, you must be bored!"

"No," replies one of the four in a decided tone.

"No, we are not bored. We work."

"In commerce?"

"No. We dig the soil and break up the rocks."

"You, too, Chalutzim!"

"Yes, but we work for ourselves, with our own capital . . . the remnant of our capital. We buy the lands disdained by the big societies: we are buying the desert of Judæa, from here to the Dead Sea, including the 'Gorge of Fire.' In any other country the Government would give us this land, and would decorate us for our courage in tackling it. Here we have to buy every inch. . . . What matter? We can manage it: I pay ten shillings a *dunam*, and at that price I can have all the jackals' lairs and scrubs that I want."

"But, seriously speaking, don't you despair before the desolation and frightful aridity of this countryside? Don't you fear the torrid climate, and the rapine of savage tribes?"

"Oh, we have seen many others! . . . A Beduin is inoffensive compared to a Red Army soldier. As to the climate, it will be hard to begin with, but we shall transform it as we fertilise the desert. We shall divert the waters of Jordan, and the land will become an excellent alluvial soil for rice and sugar cane. . . ."

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Another brother took up the tale:

"We are under no illusions. We are not yet in possession of our land. And the Arabs will inevitably kill many of us. But they won't be able to exterminate us all. And we have come here after so many tribulations, that we are determined to stay. You will see. . . . True, we could still negotiate great deals in Europe, where astrakhan and precious stones and tapestry are more than ever in demand: but we are weary of amassing money, and living in servile opulence. We hunger and thirst for the land, for its healthful toil and its dignity. We want to lead a simple, rural life: and you will see, in a generation or two, that the Arabs will have taken our place as merchants."

"Yes, yes," says King Ahasuerus, lifting his malign eyelids, while the little satrap, having finished his meal off Babylonian plate, jumped down and came, solemnly, to crouch at the foot of the old man, making, in his princely tunic, a pretty picture of other days, of other lands.

"But," said I, "you will have to renounce your fine Bokhara costume. That will be a pity, one of Asia's last glories will have perished."

"You like our holiday-dress?" asks the Tartar patriarch, through Madame Jehuda. And, after a few words exchanged in their amazing language, the four brothers left the room, soon returning completely unrecognisable, fabulous, in long robes woven and re-woven in gold, bell-shaped, and of wholly unexpected magnificence and good taste.

On their heads is the little cap, more precious than a crown.

They sit beside their father, in order of seniority, their fingers scarcely visible in their great sleeves.

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Then, and then only, I perceive that they, too, have oblique eyes and that indefinable Mongol smile of beatitude and ruse.

The one-time multi-millionaire looks at them with satisfaction, then he says:

“ If you had come here for the *seder* you would have seen, round this table, sixty robes like these.”

And I picture to myself this feast of Ahasuerus, where Mede and Persian princes and satraps of Chaldaea drank in golden cups from Suza the joy of their deliverance from *Mizraim*. . . .

But immediately I remember that these splendid vestments, seated there on gleaming Damascus arm-chairs, hide the future peasants of the Gorge of Fire and the Dead Sea.

O Eternal People, O Scattered People, who of all peoples is like thee, to astonish the world and reconcile antitheses !

CHAPTER XVII

THE HOLY OF HOLIES

It is my last day in Jerusalem.

To-morrow I leave via Sachem and Tiberias for Syria and Damascus.

So swiftly, swiftly in this clear Judæan morning air, let me run for the mere joy of my heart, for the vain but real delight of my eyes (without Zionist pre-occupations): let me hasten to the Mosque of Omar, to the marvellous blue mosque on the esplanade of the Haram-Esh-Sherif, which was the court of the Temple, the Temple of the God of Israel, the Lord of Hosts.

Yes, let me hasten to the grey Jaffa gate, let me go down the motley streets, let me descend the dear, deserted way of little, rounded, polished cobble-stones, and steps cut to suit a camel's stride—let me go down—O slow step, O pleasant vaults—with these grave sheikhs, who tell their amber chaplets.

And as soon as one arrives before the arches of the high portico, in the cold shadow of the sonorous vaults where, already, its sacred majesty stands revealed—oh, how instinctively one deadens one's footfall and almost holds one's breath, to enter entirely into the magical atmosphere.

And then, when the black gate-keeper has allowed one to enter, and one penetrates into the vast and mystical precincts, when one breathes in the unspeakable beauty of its being, compounded of space, and silence, and melancholy trees, and plastic art, and architectural colour, and blue enamel, and abandon, and springtime sun lighting up stone blocks perhaps thrice a thousand years old, of all this divine disorder charmed to an eternal dream: then one forgets why

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one has come, one knows not where to go, one sits on some stairway or some parapet, in the shade of an aromatic cypress, and allows oneself to be overcome by this octagonal, turquoise splendour, by these solitary grey arcades, by this arabesque dome; or else one amuses oneself by watching the negroes prostrated on the blinding white stone and, between the rows of yew, making a quite Persian black-and-white pattern.

One no longer even desires to go up to the sanctuary which was the Holy of Holies, and where, in the tenderest light, there spread out mosaics of dull gold, or to enter into the "extreme" mosque which was the Templars' church, or to climb the Golden Gate, whence one plunges into the valley of Jehoshaphat, or to mount the minaret of the Women, which dominates, to the east, the "garden of the King," and to the west, the "Wailing Wall."

No, to-day I stay there, at the foot of the evergreen tree, in a delicious drowsiness, while before me passes one Sheikh in green turban and yellow slippers and another in white turban and red slippers, and, tall and with a gladiator's muscles, the water-carrier, his head . . .

But it is already eleven o'clock. . . . On the circular balcony of the slender tower the Moslem *credo* is being called: "Allah is one! Allah is most great! There is no allah but Allah!"

But is not this the *Shema* of Israel: "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord"?

Oh, tragic enmity of creeds! . . . A custodian signals to us. It is time to leave the Haram-Esh-Sherif; we must relinquish this glorious enclosure to the true believers.

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Farewell solitude ! Farewell contemplation of the past ! Farewell to the Holy of Holies ! On earth shall I ever find again a spot so full of pride and of fragrance as your porches ?

Slowly we retrace our steps up the narrow cobbled street—such tiny paving-stones, so pink, so polished ; up the street where the towers above the arches that bestride the walls keep watch on us. We turn again and again to find the arches cutting out one another in succession, then fading into space.

To-day, too, the wind ruffles my muslin. For a moment I rest, seated in a corner of the Saracen Gate, and within the ramparts I look at the cochineal figs whose leaves reach almost to the grey battlements. Formerly they hid the cabins of lepers, and as a child I thought that with their stumpy leaves and pustulous fruit these cactuses were the lepers of the vegetable kingdom.

I go down once more toward the Jaffa Gate and civilised Jerusalem, but not without pausing at the Armenian convent to drink in the warm, bitter odours of the cedars : nor without entering, further along, an ancient Saracen house hidden behind a courtyard. To-day it is inhabited by two Melchite families, who let me gaze from their roof upon the mauve mountains of Moab, and listen to the solitary palm-tree of Jerusalem murmuring to the walls its enchanting, mournful cradle-song.

O my Jerusalem ! O hill where Zion had birth, watched by gliding Seraphim !

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A SPRINGTIDE IN PALESTINE

BY
MYRIAM HARRY



Madame Harry, the well-known Syrian-French authoress, presents these impressions of Palestine revisited after an absence of many years. The book is practically a confession of her conversion to Zionism, brought about by the realisation of the permanence and nobility of the work of the Jewish settlers. As a revelation of what has already been accomplished in reclaiming the derelict land, in building, in education, in the re-creation of a dying language, these sketches of life in the new Jewish communities will create surprise and discussion.

In the sympathy of her interpretation of the lure of Palestine, in her power to convey the tragedy and beauty of the past, in her vivid portraiture of the multitude of human types—primitive and sophisticated—that crowd into Jerusalem every Eastertide, Madame Harry shows herself an artist in words, and her book is one which should be read for its own sake as well as for the sidelights it throws on the astonishing progress of Zionism.

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